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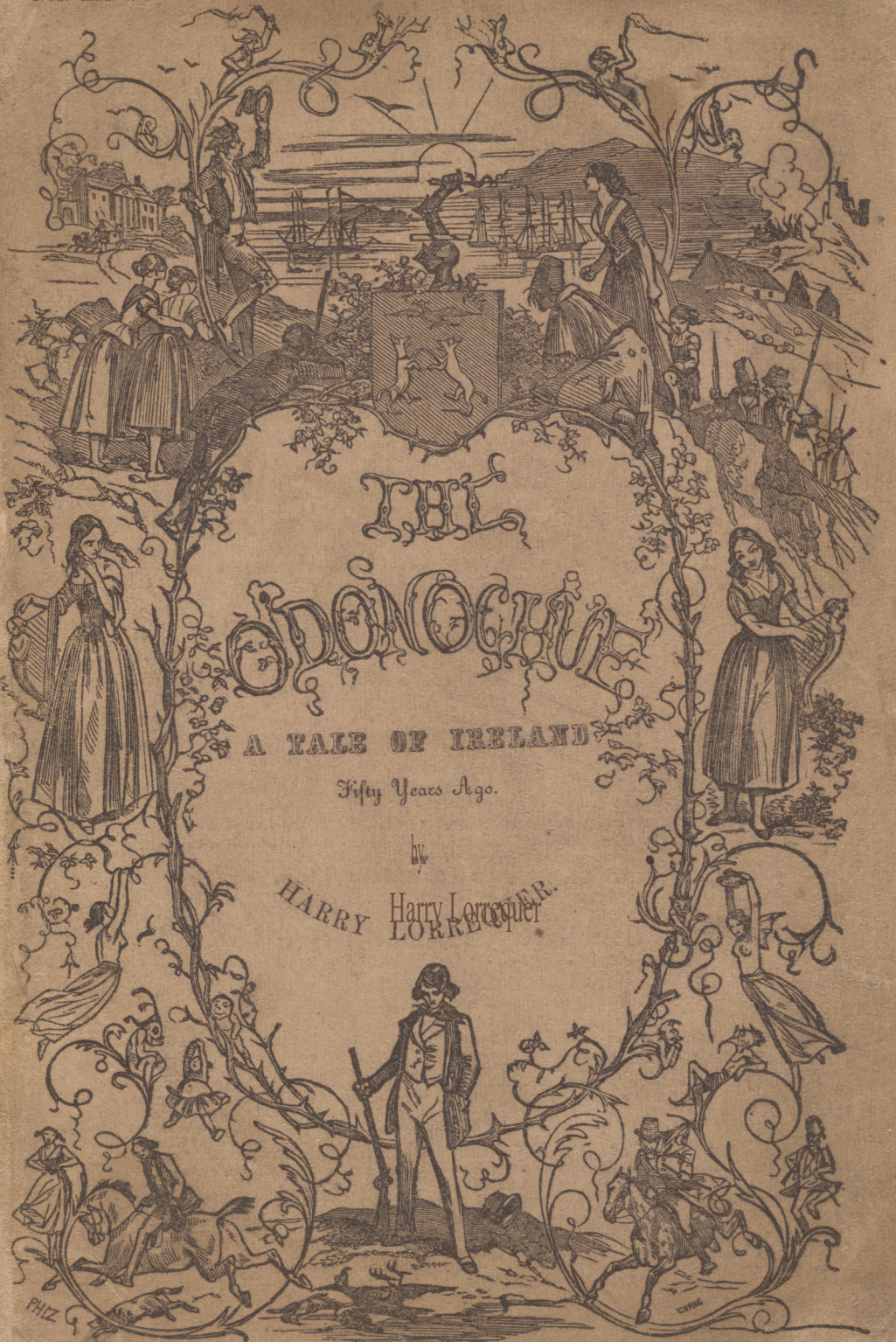

THE O'DONOGHUE

A TALE OF IRELAND

Fifty Years Ago.

by

HARRY LORREQUER.

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CHAPTER XLIV.

THE MOUNTAIN AT SUNRISE.

A LITTLE lower down the valley than the post occupied by Terry as his look-out, was a small stream, passable by stepping-stones; this was the usual parting place of the two brothers, whenever Herbert returned home for a day or so, and this limit Mark rarely or never transgressed, regarding it as the frontier of his little dominion. Beside this rivulet, as night was falling, Mark sat, awaiting with some impatience his brother's coming, for already the third evening had passed in which Herbert promised to be back, and yet he had not come.

Alternately stooping to listen, or straining his eyes to see, he waited anxiously; and while canvassing in his mind every possible casualty he could think of to account for his absence, he half resolved on pushing forward down the glen, and, if necessary, venturing even the whole way to Carrig-na-curra. Just then a sound caught his ear—he listened, and at once recognized Terry's voice, as, singing some rude verse, he came hastening down the glen at his full speed.

"Ha! I thought you'd be here," cried he, with delight in his countenance; "I knew you'd be just sitting there on that rock."

"What has happened, then, Terry, that you wanted me?"

"It was a message a man in sailor's clothes gave me for your honour this morning, and, somehow, I forgot to tell you of it when you passed, though he charged me not to forget it."

"What is it, Terry?"

"Ah, then, that's what I misremember, and I had it all right this morning. Let me think a bit."

Mark repelled every symptom of impatience, for he well knew how the slightest evidences of dissatisfaction on his part would destroy every chance of the poor fellow regaining his memory, and he waited silently for several minutes. At last, thinking to aid his recollection, he said—

"The man was a smuggler, Terry?"

"He was, but I never saw him before. He came across from Kinsale, over the mountains. Botheration to him, why didn't he say more, and I wouldn't forget it now."

"Have patience, you'll think of it all by-and-by."

"Maybe so. He was a droll-looking fellow, with a short cutlash at his side, and a hairy cap on his head; and he seemed to know yer honour well, for he said—

"'How is the O'Donoghues—don't they live hereabouts?'

"'Yes,' says I, 'a few miles down that way.'

"'Is the eldest boy at home?' says he.

"'Maybe he is, and maybe he isn't,' says I, for I wouldn't tell him where you were.

"'Could you give him a message,' says he, 'from a friend?'

"'Av it was a friend,' says I.

"'A real friend,' says he. 'Tell him—just tell him——'

"There it is now—divil a one o' me knows what he said."

Mark suffered no sign of anger to escape him, but sat without speaking a word, while Terry recapitulated every sentence in a muttering voice, to assist him in remembering what followed.

"I have it now," said he at last; and clapping his hands with glee, he cried out, "them's the very words he said—

"'Tell Mr. Mark, it's a fine sight to see the sun rising from the top of Hungry Mountain; and if the wind last, it will be worth seeing to-morrow.'"

"Were those his words?" asked Mark eagerly.

"Them, and no other—I have it all in my head now."

"Which way did he take when he left you?"

"He turned up the glen, towards Googawn Barra, and I seen him crossing the mountain afterwards; but here comes Master Herbert;" and at the same instant he was seen coming up the valley at a fast pace.

When the first greetings were over, Herbert informed Mark that a certain stir and movement in the glen and its neighbourhood for the last few days had obliged him to greater caution; that several strangers had been seen lurking about Carrig-na-curra; and that in addition to the military posted at Mary's, a sergeant's guard had that morning arrived at "the Lodge," and taken up their quarters there. All these signs of vigilance combined to make Herbert more guarded, and induced him to delay for a day or two his return to the shealing.

"Hemsworth has been twice over at our house," continued Herbert, "and seems most anxious about you; he cannot understand why we have not heard from my uncle. It appears to me, Mark, as if difficulties were thickening around us; and yet this fear may only be the apprehension which springs from mystery. I cannot see my way through this dark and clouded atmosphere."

"Never fret about the dangers that come like shadows, Herbert.

Come up the mountain with me to-morrow at sunrise, and let us take counsel from the free and bracing air of the peak of old Hungry."

Herbert was but too happy to find his own gloomy thoughts so well combatted, and in mutual converse they each grew lighter in heart; and when at last, wearied out, they lay down upon the heather of the shealing, they slept without a dream.

It was still dark as midnight when Mark awoke and looked at his watch—it wanted a quarter of four. The night was a wild and gusty one, with occasional showers of thin sleet, and along the shore the sea beat heavily, as though a storm was brewing at a distance off.

The message of the smuggler was his first thought on waking, but could he venture sufficient trust in Terry's version to draw any inference from it? Still, he resolved to ascend the mountain, little favourable as the weather promised for such an undertaking. It was not without reluctance that Herbert found himself called upon to accompany his brother. The black and dreary night, the swooping wind, the wet spray, drifting up to the very shealing, were but sorry inducements to stir abroad; and he did his utmost to persuade him to defer the excursion to a more favourable moment.

"We shall be wet through, and see nothing for our pains, Mark," said he, half sulkily, as the other overruled each objection in turn.

"Wet we may possibly be," said Mark; "but with the wind, northing by west, the mist will clear away, and by sunrise the coast will be glorious; it is a spring-tide, too, and there will be a sea running mountains high."

"I know well we shall find ourselves in a cloud on the top of the mountain; it is but one day in a whole year any thing can be seen favourably."

"And who is to say this is not that day? It is my birth-day, Herbert—a most auspicious event, when we talk of fortunate occurrences."

The tone of sarcasm he spoke these words in, silenced Herbert's scruples, and without further objection he prepared to follow Mark's guidance.

The drifting rain, and the spongy heavy ground in which at each moment the feet sank to the very instep, made the way toilsome and weary, and the two brothers seldom spoke as they plodded along the steep ascent.

Mark's deep pre-occupation of mind took away all thought of the dreary road; but Herbert followed with reluctant steps, half angry with himself for compliance with what he regarded as an absurd caprice. The way was not without its perils, and Mark halted from time to time

to warn his brother of the danger of some precipice, or the necessity to guard against the slippery surface of the heather. Except at these times, he rarely spoke, but strode on with firm step, lost in his own reflections.

"We are now twelve hundred feet above the lake, Herbert," said he, after a long silence on both sides, "and the mountain at this side is like a wall. This same island of ours has noble bulwarks for defence."

Herbert made no reply; the swooping clouds that hurried past, heavily charged with vapour, shut out every object; and to him the rugged path was a dark and cheerless way. Once more they continued their ascent, which here became steeper and more difficult at every step; and although Mark was familiar with each turn and winding of the narrow track, more than once he was obliged to stop, and consider the course before him. Herbert, to whom these interruptions were fresh sources of irritation, at length exclaimed—

"My dear Mark, have we not gone far enough yet, to convince you that there is no use in going farther. It is dark as midnight this moment—you yourself are scarcely certain of the way—there are precipices and gulleys on every side—and grant that we do reach the top for sunrise, what shall we be able to see amid the immense masses of cloud around us?"

"No, Herbert, that same turning back policy it is, which thwarts success in life. Had you yourself followed such an impulse, you had not gained the honours that are yours. Onward, is the word of hope to all. And what if the day should not break clearly, it is a fine thing to sit on the peak of old Hungry, with the circling clouds wheeling madly below you, to hear the deep thundering of the sea far, far away, and the cry of the curlew mingling with the wailing wind—to feel yourself high above the busy world, in the dreary region of mist and shadow. If at such times as this the eye ranges not over leagues of coast and sea, long winding valleys and wide plains, the prophetic spirit fostered by such agencies looks out on life, and images of the future flit past in cloudy shapes and changing forms. There, see that black mass that slowly moves along, and seems to beckon us with giant arm. You'd not reject an augury so plain."

"I see nothing, and if I go on much farther this way, I shall feel nothing either, I am so benumbed with cold and rain already."

"Here, then, taste this—I had determined to give you nothing until we reached the summit."

Herbert drained the little measure of whiskey, and resumed his way more cheerily.

"There is a bay down here beneath where we stand—a lovely little nook in summer, with a shore like gold, and waves bright as the greenest emerald. It is a wild and stormy spot to-day—no boat could live a moment there; and so steep is the cliff, this stone will find its way to the bottom within a minute."

And as Mark spoke he detached a fragment of rock from the mountain, and sent it bounding over the edge of the precipice, while Herbert, awe-struck at the nearness of the peril, recoiled instinctively from the brink of the cliff.

"There was a ship of the Spanish Armada wrecked in that little bay—they show you still some mounds of earth upon the shore they call the Spaniards' graves," said Mark, as he stood peering through the misty darkness into the depth below. "The peasantry had lighted a fire on this rock, and the vessel, a three-decker, decoyed by the signal, held on her course, in shore, and was lost. Good heavens!" cried he, after a brief pause, "why has this fatality ever been our lot? Why have we welcomed our foes with smiles, and our friends with hatred and destruction? These same Spaniards were our brethren and our kindred, and the bitter enemies of our enslavers; and even yet we can perpetuate the memory of their ruin, as a thing of pride and triumph. Are we for ever to be thus, or is a better day to dawn upon us?"

Herbert, who by experience knew how much more excited Mark became by even the slightest opposition, forbore to speak, and again they pursued their way.

They had continued for some time thus, when Mark, taking Herbert's arm, pointed to a dark mass which seemed to loom straight above their heads, where, towering to a considerable height, it terminated in a sharp pinnacle.

"Yonder is the summit, Herbert—courage for a quarter of an hour more, and the breach is won."

The youth heaved a heavy sigh, and muttered—

"Would it were so."

If Herbert became dispirited and worn out by the dark and dreary way, where no sight nor sound relieved the dull monotony of fatigue, Mark's spirit seemed to grow lighter with every step he went. As if he had left his load of care with the nether world, his light and bounding movement, and his joyous voice, spoke of a heart which, throwing off its weight of sorrow, revelled once more in youthful ecstasy.

"You who are a poet, Herbert, tell me if you have faith in those instinctive fancies which seem to shadow forth events."

"If you mean to ask me whether, from my present sensations, I anti-

cipate a heavy cold, or a fit of rheumatism, I say, most certainly," replied Herbert, half doggedly.

Mark smiled, and continued—

"No, those are among the common course of events. What I asked for was an explanation of my own feelings at this moment. Why, here upon this lone and gloomy mountain, a secret whispering at my heart tells me to hope—that my days and nights of disaster are nigh over—and that the turning point of my life is at hand, even as that bold peak above us."

"I must confess, Mark, this is a strange time and place for such rose-coloured visions," said Herbert, as he shook the rain from his soaked garments; "*my* imagination cannot carry me to such a lofty flight."

Mark was too intent upon his own thoughts to bestow much attention on the tone and spirit of Herbert's remark, and he pressed forward towards the summit with every effort of his strength. After a brief but toilsome exertion he reached the top, and seated himself on a little pile of stones that marked the point of the mountain. The darkness was still great; faint outlines of the lesser mountains beneath could only be traced through the masses of heavy cloud that hung, as it were, suspended above the earth; while over the sea an unusual blackness was spread. The wind blew with terrific force around the lofty peak where Mark sat, and in the distant valleys he could hear the sound of crashing branches as the storm swept through the wood; from the sea itself, too, a low booming noise arose, as the caves along the shore re-echoed to the swelling clangour of the waves.

Herbert at last reached the spot, but so exhausted by the unaccustomed fatigue, that he threw himself down at Mark's feet, and with a wearied sigh exclaimed—

"Thank heaven, there is no more of it."

"Day will not break for half an hour yet," said Mark, pointing westward; "the grey dawn always shows over the sea. I have seen the whole surface like gold, before the dull mountains had one touch of light."

The heavy breathing of the youth, as he lay with his head on Mark's knees, attracted him; he looked down, and perceived that Herbert had fallen into a calm and tranquil sleep.

"Poor fellow," cried Mark, as he smoothed the hair upon his brow, "this toil has been too much for him."

Placing himself in such a position as best to shelter his brother from the storm, Mark sat awaiting the breaking dawn. The hopes that in the active ascent of the mountain were high in his heart, already began

to fail; exertion had called them forth, and now, as he sat silently amid the dreary waste of darkness, his spirit fell with every moment. One by one the bright visions he had conjured up faded away, his head fell heavily on his bosom, and thoughts gloomy and dark as the dreary morning crowded on his brain.

As he remained thus deep sunk in sad musings, the grey dawn broke over the sea, and gradually a pinkish hue stained the sky eastward. The rain, which up to this time drifted in heavy masses, ceased to fall; and instead of the gusty storm, blowing in fitful blasts, a gentle breeze rolled the mists along the valleys, as if taking away the drapery of Night at the call of Morning. At first the mountain peaks appeared through the dense clouds; and then, by degrees, their steep sides, begirt with rock, and fissured with many a torrent. At length the deep valleys and glens began to open to the eye, and the rude cabins of the peasants, marked out by the thin blue wreath of smoke that rose into the air, ere it was scattered by the fresh breeze of morning. Over the sea the sunlight glittered, tipping the glad waves that danced and sported towards the shore, and making the white foam upon the breakers look fairer than snow itself. Mark looked upon the scene thus suddenly changed, and shaking his brother's arm, he called out—

"Awake, Herbert! see what a glorious day is breaking. Look, that is Sugarloaf, piercing the white cloud; and yonder is Castletown. See how the shore is marked out in every jutting point and cliff. I can see the Kenmare river as it opens to the sea."

"It is indeed beautiful," exclaimed Herbert, all fatigue forgotten in the extasy of the moment. "Is not that Garran Thual, Mark, that rears its head above the others?"

But Mark's eyes were turned in a different direction, and he paid no attention to the question.

"Yes," cried Herbert, still gazing intently towards the land, "and that must be Mangerton. Am I right, Mark?"

"What can that mean?" said Mark, seizing Herbert's arm, and pointing to a distant point across Bantry Bay. "There, you saw it then."

"Yes, a bright flash of flame. See, it burns steadily now."

"Ay, and there's another below Beerhaven, and another yonder at the Smuggler's Rock."

And while he was yet speaking, the three fires blazed out, and continued to burn brilliantly in the grey light of the morning. The dark mist that moved over the sea gave way before the strong breeze, and the tall spars of a large ship were seen as a vessel rounded the point, and

held on her course up Bantry Bay. Even at the distance Mark's experienced eye could detect that she was a ship of war—her ports, on which the sun threw a passing gleam, bristled with guns, and her whole trim and bearing bespoke a frigate.

"She's a King's ship, Mark, in pursuit of some smuggler," said Herbert; "and the fires we have seen were signals to the other. How beautifully she sails along; and see, is not that another?"

Mark made no reply, but pointed straight out to sea, where now seven sail could be distinctly reckoned, standing towards the Bay with all their canvas set. The report of a cannon turned their eyes towards the frigate, and they perceived that already she was abreast of Whitty Island, where she was about to anchor.

"That gun was fired by her: and see, there goes her ensign. What does that mean, Mark?"

"It means Liberty, my boy!" screamed Mark, with a yell that sounded like madness. "France has come to the rescue! See, there they are—eight—nine of them!—and the glorious tricolor floating at every mast! Oh, great heaven! in whose keeping the destinies of men and kingdoms lie, look favourably upon our struggle now. Yes, my brother, I was right—a brighter hour is about to shine upon our country! Look there—think of those gallant fellows that have left home and country to bring freedom across the seas, and say, if you will be less warm in the cause than the alien and the stranger. How nobly they come along! Herbert, be with us—be of us, now!"

"Whatever be our ills, here," said Herbert sternly, "I know of no sympathy to bind us to France; nor would I accept a boon at such hands, infidel and blood-stained as she is."

"Stop, Herbert; let us not here, where we may meet for the last time, interchange aught that should darken memory hereafter. My course is yonder."

"Farewell, then, Mark; I will not vainly endeavour to turn you from your rash project. The reasons that seemed cold and valueless in the hour of tranquil thought, have few chances of success in the moment of your seeming triumph."

"Seeming triumph!" exclaimed Mark, as a slight change coloured his cheek. "And will you not credit what your eyes reveal before you? Are these visions? Was that loud shot a trick of the imagination? Oh! Herbert, if the loyalty you boast of, have no better foundation than these fancies, be with your country—stand by her in the day of her peril."

"I will do so, Mark, and with no failing spirit either," said Herbert, as he turned away, sad and sorrow-struck.

"You would not betray us," cried Mark, as he saw his brother preparing to descend the mountain.

"Oh, Mark, you should not have said this."

And in a torrent of tears he threw himself upon his brother's bosom. For some minutes they remained close locked in each other's arms, and then Herbert, tearing himself away, clasped Mark's hand in both of his, and kissed it. The last "Good-bye" broke from each lip together, and they parted.

Mark remained on the spot where his brother had left him, his eyes fixedly directed towards the Bay, where already a second ship had arrived—a large three-decker, with an admiral's pennon flying from the mast-head. The first burst of wild enthusiasm over, he began to reflect on what was next to be done. Of course he should lose no time in presenting himself to the officers in command of the expedition, and making known to them his name, and the place he occupied in the confidence of his countrymen. His great doubt was, whether he should not precede this act by measures for assembling and rallying the people, who evidently would be as much taken by surprise as himself at the sudden arrival of the French.

The embarrassment of the position was great; for although deeply implicated in the danger of the plot, he never had enjoyed either intimacy or intercourse with its leaders. How then should he satisfy the French that his position was such as entitled him to their confidence? The only possible escape to this difficulty was by marshalling around him a considerable body of the peasantry, ready and willing to join the arms and follow the fortunes of the invaders.

"They cannot long distrust me with a force of three hundred men at my back," exclaimed Mark aloud, as he descended the mountain with rapid strides. "I know every road through these valleys—every place where a stand could be made, or an escape effected. We will surprise the party of soldiers at Mary M'Kelly's, and there, there are arms enough for all the peasantry of the country."

Thus saying, and repeating to himself the names of the different farmers whom he remembered as true to the cause, and on whose courage and readiness he depended at this moment, he hastened on.

"Holt at the cross-roads promised eighteen, all armed with fire-locks. M'Sweeny has six sons, and stout fellows they are, every man of them ready. Then, there are the O'Learys, but there's a split amongst them—confound their petty feuds, this is no time to indulge them. They shall come out, and they must—ah! hand in hand, too, though they have been enemies this twelvemonth. Black O'Sullivan numbers nigh eighty

—pike-men every one of them. Our French friends may smile at their ragged garments, but our enemies will scarce join in the laugh. Carrig-na-curra must be occupied, it is the key of the glen. 'The Lodge' we'll burn to the ground: but no, we must not visit the sin of the servant on the master. Young Travers behaved nobly to me—there is a wild time coming, and let us, at least, begin our work in a better spirit, for bloodshed soon teaches cruelty."

Now, muttering these short and broken sentences, now, wondering what strength the French force might be—how armed—how disposed for the enterprize—what spirit prevailed among the officers, and what hopes of success animated the chiefs—Mark moved along, eager for the hour to come when the green flag should be displayed, and the war-cry of Ireland ring in her native valleys.

CHAPTER XLV.

"THE PROGRESS OF TREACHERY."

LEAVING, for the present, Mark O'Donoghue to the duties he imposed on himself of rallying the people around the French standard, we shall turn to the old castle of Carrig-na-curra, where life seemed to move on in the same unbroken tranquillity. For several days past, Hemsworth, still weak from his recent illness, had been a frequent visitor, and although professing that the great object of his solicitude was the safety of young O'Donoghue, he found time and opportunity to suggest to Kate, that a more tender feeling influenced him: so artfully had he played his part, and so blended were his attentions with traits of deference and respect, that however little she might be disposed to encourage his addresses, the difficulty of repelling them without offence was great indeed. This delicacy on her part was either mistaken by Hemsworth, or taken as a ground of advantage. All his experiences in life pointed to the fact, that success is ever attainable by him who plays well his game; that the accidents of fortune, instead of being obstacles and interruptions, are in reality, to one of quick intelligence, but so

many aids and allies. His illness alone had disconcerted his plans; but now once more well, and able to conduct his schemes, he had no fears for the result. Up to this moment, every thing promised success. It was more than doubtful that the Travers' would ever return to Ireland. Frederick would be unwilling to visit the neighbourhood where his affections had met so severe a shock. The disturbed state of the country, and the events which Hemsworth well knew must soon occur, would in all likelihood deter Sir Marmaduke from any wish to revisit his Irish property. This was one step gained: already he was in possession of a large portion of the Glenflesk estate, of which he was well aware the title was defective, for he had made it a ground of considerable abatement in the purchase money to the O'Donoghue, that his son was in reality under age at the time of sale. Mark's fate was, however, in his hands, and he had little fear that the secret was known by any other. Nothing, then, remained incomplete to the accomplishment of his wishes, except his views regarding Kate. Were she to become his wife, the small remnant of the property that pertained to them would fall into his hands, and he become the lord of the soil. His ambitions were higher than this. Through the instrumentality of Lanty Lawler, he had made himself master of the conspiracy in all its details. He knew the names of the several chiefs, the parts assigned them, the places of rendezvous, their hopes, their fears, and their difficulties. He was aware of the views of France, and had in his possession copies of several letters which passed between members of the French executive and the leaders of the United party in Ireland. Far from communicating this information to the Government, he treasured it as the source of his own future elevation. From time to time, it is true, he made known certain facts regarding individuals whom he either dreaded for their power, or suspected that they might themselves prove false to their party and betray the plot; but, save in these few instances, he revealed nothing of what he knew, determining, at the proper moment, to make this knowledge the ground-work of his fortune.

"Twenty-four hours of rebellion," said he, "one day and night of massacre and bloodshed will make me a Peer of the realm. I know well what terror will pervade the land, when the first rumour of a French landing gains currency. I can picture to myself the affrighted looks of the Council; the alarm depicted in every face, when the post brings the intelligence, that a force is on its march towards the capital; and then—then, when I can lay my hand on each rebel of them all, and say, this man is a traitor, and that, a rebel—when I can show where arms are collected and ammunition stored—when I can tell the plan of their

operation, their numbers, their organization, and their means—I have but to name the price of my reward."

Such were the speculations that occupied the slow hours of his recovery, and such the thoughts which engrossed the first days of his returning health.

The latest letters he had seen from France announced that the expedition would not sail till January, and then, in the event of escaping the English force in the Channel, would proceed to land fifteen thousand men on the banks of the Shannon. The causes which accelerated the sailing of the French fleet before the time originally determined on were unknown to Hemsworth, and on the very morning when the vessels anchored in Bantry Bay, he was himself a visitor beneath the roof of Carrig-na-curra, where he had passed the preceding night, the severity of the weather having detained him there. He, therefore, knew nothing of what had happened, and was calmly deliberating on the progress of his own plans, when events were occurring which were destined to disconcert and destroy them.

The family was seated at breakfast, and Hemsworth, whose letters had been brought over from "the Lodge," was reading aloud such portions of news as could interest or amuse the O'Donoghue and Kate, when he was informed that Wylie was without, and most anxious to see him for a few minutes. There was no communication which, at the moment, he deemed could be of much importance, and he desired him to wait. Wylie again requested a brief interview—one minute would be enough—that his tidings were of the deepest consequence.

"This is his way ever," said Hemsworth, rising from the table; "if a tenant has broken down a neighbour's ditch, or a heifer is impounded, he always comes with this same pressing urgency;" and, angry at the interruption, he left the room to hear the intelligence.

"Still, no letter from Archy, Kate," said the O'Donoghue, when they were alone; "once more the post is come, and nothing for us. I am growing more and more uneasy about Mark; these delays will harass the poor boy, and drive him perhaps to some rash step."

"Mr. Hemsworth is doing everything, however, in his power," said Kate, far more desirous of offering consolation to her uncle, than satisfied in her own mind as to the state of matters. "He is in constant correspondence with Government; the only difficulty is, they demand disclosures my cousin neither can, nor ought to make. A pardon is no grace, when it commutes death for dishonour. This will, I hope, be got over soon."

While she was yet speaking, the door softly opened, and Kerry, with

a noiseless step, slipped in, and approaching the table unseen and unheard, was beside the O'Donoghue's chair before he was perceived.

"Whisht, master dear—whisht, Miss Kate," said he, with a gesture of warning towards the door. "There's great news without. The French is landed—twenty-eight ships is down in Bantry Bay. Bony himself is with them. I heard it all, as Sam Wylie was telling Hemsworth; I was inside the pantry door."

"The French landed!" cried the O'Donoghue, in whom amazement overcame all sensation of joy or sorrow.

"The French here in Ireland!" cried Kate, her eyes sparkling with enthusiastic delight; but before she could add a word, Hemsworth reentered. Whether his efforts to seem calm and unmoved were in reality well devised, or that, as is more probable, Hemsworth's own pre-occupation prevented his strict observance of the others, he never remarked that the O'Donoghue and his niece exhibited any traits of anxiety or impatience; while Kerry, after performing a variety of very unnecessary acts and attentions about the table, at last left the room, with a sigh over his inability to protract his departure.

Hemsworth eye wandered to the door to see if it was closed before he spoke; and then leaning forward, said, in a low, cautious voice—

"I have just heard some news that may prove very important. A number of the people have assembled in arms in the glen, your son Mark at their head. What their precise intentions, or whither they are about to direct their steps, I know not; but I see clearly that young Mr. O'Donoghue will fatally compromise himself, if this rash step become known. The Government never could forgive such a proceeding on his part. I need not tell you that this daring must be a mere hopeless exploit; such enterprises have but one termination—the scaffold."

The old man and his niece exchanged glances—rapid, but full of intelligence. Each seemed to ask the other, "Is this man false? Is he suppressing a part of the truth at this moment, or is this all invention? Why has he not spoken of the great event—the arrival of the French?"

Kate was the first to venture to sound him, as she asked—

"And is the rising some mere sudden ebullition of discontent, or have they concerted any movement with others at a distance?"

"A mere isolated outbreak—the rash folly of hair-brained boys, without plan or project."

"What is to become of poor Mark?" cried the O'Donoghue, all suspicions of treachery forgotten in the anxiety of his son's safety.

"I have thought of that," said Hemsworth, hastily. "The move-

ment must be put down at once. As a magistrate, and in the full confidence of the Government, I have no second course open to me, and therefore I have ordered up the military from Macroom. There are four troops of cavalry and an infantry regiment there. With them in front, this ill-disciplined rabble will never dare to advance, but soon scatter and disband themselves in the mountains—the leaders only will incur any danger. But as regards your son, you have only to write a few lines to him, and dispatch them by some trusty messenger, saying that you are aware of what has happened—know everything—and without wishing to interfere or thwart his designs, you desire to see and speak with him, here, at once. This he will not refuse. Once here safe, and within these walls, I'll hasten the pursuit of these foolish country fellows; and even should any of them be taken, your son will not be of the number. You must take care, however, when he is here, that he does not leave this until I return."

"And are these brave fellows, misguided though they be, to be kidnapped thus, and by our contrivance, too?" said Kate, on whom, for the first time, a dread of Hemsworth's duplicity was fast breaking.

"I did not know Miss O'Donoghue's interest took so wide a range, or that her sympathies were so Catholic," said Hemsworth, with a smile of double meaning. "If she would save her cousin, however, she must adopt my plan, or at least suggest a better one."

"Yes, yes, Kate, Mr. Hemsworth is right," said the O'Donoghue, in whom selfishness was always predominant; "we must contrive to get Mark here, and to keep him when we have him."

"And you may rely upon it, Miss O'Donoghue," said Hemsworth, in a whisper, "that my pursuit of the others will not boast of any excessive zeal in the cause of loyalty. Such fellows may be suffered to escape, and neither King nor Constitution have any ground of complaint for it."

Kate smiled gratefully in return, and felt angry with herself for even a momentary injustice to the honourable nature of Hemsworth's motives.

"Mr. Hemsworth's horses is at the door," said Kerry, at the same moment.

"It is, then, agreed upon, that you will write this letter at once," said Hemsworth, leaning over the old man's chair, as he whispered the words into his ear.

The O'Donoghue nodded an assent.

"Without knowing that," continued Hemsworth, "I should be uncertain how to proceed. I must not let the Government suppose me

either ignorant or lukewarm. Lose no time, therefore; send off the letter, and leave the rest to me."

"You are not going to ride, I hope," said Kate, as she looked out of the window down the glen, where already the rain was falling in torrents, and the wind blowing a perfect hurricane. Hemsworth muttered a few words in a low tone, at which Kate coloured, and looked away.

"Nay, Miss O'Donoghue," said he, still whispering, "I am not one of those who make a bargain for esteem; if I cannot win regard, I will never buy it."

There was a sadness in his words, and an air of self-respect about him, as he spoke them, that touched Kate far more than ever she had been before by any expression of his feelings. When she saw him leave the room, her first thought was, "It is downright meanness to suspect him."

"Is it not strange, Kate," said the O'Donoghue, as he took her hand in his, "he never mentioned the French landing to us? What can this mean?"

"I believe I can understand it, sir," said Kate, musingly; for already she had settled in her mind, that while Hemsworth would neglect no measures for the safety of Carrig-na-curra, he scrupled to announce tidings which might overwhelm them with alarm and terror. "But let us think of the letter; Kerry, I suppose, is the best person to send with it."

"Yes, Kerry can take it; and as the way does not lead past Mary's door, there's a chance of his delivering it without a delay of three hours on the road."

"There, sir, will that do?" said Kate, as she handed him a paper, on which hastily a few lines were written.

"Perfectly—nothing better; only, my sweet Kate, when a note begins 'my dear son,' it should scarcely be signed 'your own affectionate Kate O'Donoghue.'"

Kate blushed deeply, as she tore the paper in fragments, and without a word reseated herself at the table.

"I have done better this time," said she, as she folded the note and sealed it; while the old man, with an energy quite unusual for him, arose and rung the bell for Kerry.

"Did I ever think I could have done this," said Kate to herself, as a tear slowly coursed along her cheek and fell on the letter; that I could dare to recall him, when both honour and country demand his services; that I could plot for life, when all that makes life worth having is in the opposite scale?"

"You must find out master Mark, Kerry," said the O'Donoghue, "and give him this letter; there is no time to be lost about it."

"Sorra fear; I'll put it into his hand this day."

"This day!" cried Kate, impatiently. "It must reach him within three hours time. Away at once—the foot of Hungry Mountain—the shealing—Bantry Bay—you cannot have any difficulty in finding him now."

Kerry waited not for further bidding, and though not by any means determined to make any unusual exertion, left the room with such rapidity as augured well for the future.

"Well," said Mrs. Branagan, whose anxiety for news had led her to the head of the kitchen stairs, an excursion which, at no previous moment of her life, had she been known to take, "well, Kerry, what's going on now?"

"Faix, then, I'll tell ye, ma'am," said he, sighing; "'tis myself they're wanting to kill. Here am I setting out wid a letter, and where to, do you think? the top of Hungry Mountain, in the Bay of Bantry, that's the address—divil a lie in it."

"And who is it for?" said Mrs. Branagan, who, affecting to bestow a critical examination on the document, was inspecting the superscription wrong side up."

"'Tis for Master Mark; I heard it all outside the door; they don't want him to go with the boys, now that the French is landed, and we're going to have the country to ourselves. 'Tis a dhroll day when an O'Donoghue would'nt have a fight for his father's acres."

"Bad cess to the weak-hearted, wherever they are," exclaimed Mrs. Branagan; "don't give him the letter, Kerry avich; lie quiet in the glen till evening, and say you couldn't find him, by any manner of means. Do that, now, and it will be a good sarvice to your country this day."

"I was just thinking that same myself," said Kerry, whose resolution wanted little prompting; "after I cross the river, I'll turn into the Priests' Glen, and never stir out till evening."

With these honest intentions regarding his mission, Kerry set out, and if any apology could be made for his breach of faith, the storm might plead for him; it had now reached its greatest violence; the wind blowing in short and frequent gusts, snapped the large branches like mere twigs, and covered the road with fragments of timber; the mountain rivulets, too, were swollen, and dashed madly down the rocky cliffs with a deafening clamour, while the rain, swooping past in torrents, concealed the sky, and covered the earth with darkness. Muttering in no favourable spirit over the waywardness of that sex, to whose peculiar

interposition he ascribed his present excursion, Kerry plodded along, turning, as he went, a despairing look at the barren and bleak prospect around him. To seek for shelter in the glen, he knew was out of the question, and so he at once determined to gain the priest's cottage, where a comfortable turf fire and a rasher of bacon were certain to welcome him.

Dreadful as the weather was, Kerry wondered that he met no one on the road. He expected to have seen groups of people, and all the signs of that excitement the arrival of the French might be supposed to call forth; but, on the contrary, everything was desolate as usual, not a human being appeared, nor could he hear a signal nor a sound, that betokened a gathering.

"I wouldn't wonder now if it was a lie of Sam Wylie's, and the French wasn't here at all," said he to himself; 'tis often I heerd that Hemsworth could have the rebellion brake out whenever he liked it, and sorra bit but that may be it now, just to pretend the French was here, to get the boys out, and let the army at them."

This reflection of Kerry's was scarcely conceived, when it was strengthened by a boy who was coming from Glengariff with a turf-car, nd who told him that the ships that came in with the morning's tide had all weighed anchor, and sailed out of the Bay before twelve o'clock, and that nobody knew anything about them, what they were, and whence from. "We thought they were the French," said the boy, "till we seen them sailing away; but then we knew it wasn't them, and some said it was the King's ships coming in to guard Bantry."

"And they are not there now?" said Kerry.

"Not one of them; they're out to say, and out of sight, this hour back."

Kerry hesitated for a second or two, whether this intelligence might not entitle him to turn homeward; but a second thought—the priest's kitchen—seemed to have the advantage, and thither he bent his steps accordingly.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE PRIEST'S COTTAGE.

When Mark and Herbert separated on the mountain, each took a different path downward. Mark, bent on assembling the people at once, and proclaiming the arrival of their friends, held his course towards Glengariff and the coast, where the fishermen were, to a man, engaged in the plot. Herbert, uncertain how to proceed, was yet equally anxious to lose no time, but could form no definite resolve what course to adopt amid his difficulties. To give notice of the French landing, to apprise the magistrates of the approaching outbreak, was, of course, his duty; but in doing this, might he not be the means of Mark's ruin;—while, on the other hand, to conceal his knowledge would be an act of disloyalty to his sovereign, a forfeiture of the principles he held dear, and the source, perhaps, of the most dreadful evils to his country. Where, too, should he seek for counsel or advice—his father, he well knew, would only regard the means of his brother's safety, reckless of all other consequences; Kate's opinions, vague and undefined as they were, would be in direct opposition to his own. Hemsworth he dared not confide in—what then remained! There was but one for miles round, in whose judgment and honour together he had trust; but from him latterly he had kept studiously aloof. This was his old tutor, Father Rourke. Unwilling to inflict pain upon the old man, and still unable to reconcile himself to anything like duplicity in the matter, Herbert had avoided the occasion of meeting him, and of avowing that change in his religious belief, which, although secretly working for many a year, had only reached its accomplishment when absent from home. He was aware how such a disclosure would afflict his old friend —how impossible would be the effort to persuade him that such a change had its origin in conviction, and not in schemes of worldly ambition; and to save himself the indignity of defence from such an accusation, and the pain of an interview, where the matter should be discussed, he had preferred leaving to time and accident, the disclosure, which from his own lips would have been a painful sacrifice to both parties. These considerations, important enough as they regarded his own happiness, had little weight with him now. The graver questions had swallowed up all

others—the safety of the country—his brother's fate. It was true the priest's sympathies would be exclusively with one party; he would not view with Herbert's eye the coming struggle; but still might he not regard with him the results?—might he not, and with prescience stronger from his age, anticipate the dreadful miseries of a land devastated by civil war?—was it not possible that he might judge unfavourably of success, and prefer to endure what he regarded as evils, rather than incur the horrors of a rebellion, and the re-enactment of penalties it would call down?

The hopes such calculations suggested were higher, because Mark had himself often avowed, that the French would only consent to the enterprize, on the strict understanding of being seconded by the almost unanimous voice of the nation. Their expression was, "We are ready and willing to meet England in arms, provided not one Irishman be in the ranks." Should Father Rourke, then, either from motives of policy or prudence, think unfavourably of the scheme, his influence, unbounded over the people, would throw a damper on the rising, and either deter the French from any forward movement, or at least delay it, and afford time for the Government to take measures of defence. This alone might have its effect on Mark, and perhaps be the means of saving him.

Whether because he caught at this one chance of succour, when all around seemed hopeless, or that the mind fertilizes the fields of its own discovery, Herbert grew more confident each moment that this plan would prove successful, and turned with an eager heart towards the valley where the priest lived. In his eagerness to press forward, however, he diverged from the path, and at last reached a part of the mountain where a tremendous precipice intervened, and stopped all further progress. The storm increasing every minute made the way slow and perilous, for around the different peaks the wind swept with a force that carried all before it. Vexed at his mistake, he resolved, if possible, to discover some new way down the mountain; but in the endeavour he only wandered still further from his course, and finally found himself in front of the sea once more.

The heavy rain and the dense drift shut out for some minutes the view; but when at last he saw the Bay, what was his surprise to perceive that the French fleet was no longer there; he turned his eyes on every side, but the storm-lashed water bore no vessel on its surface, and save some fishing craft at anchor in the little nooks and bays of the coast, not a mast could be seen.

Scarcely able to credit the evidence of his senses, he knelt down on

the cliff, and bent his gaze steadily on the Bay; and when at length re-assured and certain that no deception existed, he began to doubt whether the whole had not been unreal, and that the excitement of his interview with Mark had conjured the images his wishes suggested. The faint flickering embers of an almost extinguished fire on the Smuggler's Rock decided the question, and he knew at once that all had actually happened.

He did not wait long to speculate on the reasons of this sudden flight —enough for him that the most pressing danger was past, and time afforded to rescue Mark from peril; and without a thought upon that armament, whose menace had already filled him with apprehension, he sped down the mountain in reckless haste, and never halted till he reached the glen beneath. The violence of the storm—the beating rain, seemed to excite him to higher efforts of strength and endurance, and his courage appeared to rise as difficulties thickened around him. It was late in the day, however, before he came in sight of the priest's cottage, and where, as the gloom was falling, a twinkling light now shone.

It was with a last effort of strength, almost exhausted by fatigue and hunger, that Herbert gained the door; this lay, as usual, wide open, and entering, he fell overcome upon a seat. The energy that had sustained him hitherto seemed suddenly to have given way, and he lay back scarcely conscious, and unable to stir. The confusion of sense, so general after severe fatigue, prevented him for some time from hearing voices in the little parlour beside him; but after a brief space he became aware of this vicinity, when suddenly the well-known accents of Mark struck upon his ear; he was speaking louder than was his wont, and evidently with an effort to control his rising temper, while the priest, in a low, calm voice, seemed endeavouring to dissuade and turn him from some purpose.

A brief silence ensued, during which Mark paced the room with slow and heavy steps, then ceasing suddenly he said—

"Why was it, then, that we never heard of these scruples before, sir?—why were we not told that unbelieving France was no fitting ally for saintly Ireland? But why do I ask: had the whole fleet arrived in safety—were there not thirteen missing vessels, we should hear less of such Christian doubts."

"You are unjust, Mark," said the priest, calmly; "you know me too well and too long, to put any faith in your reproaches. I refuse to address the people, because I would not see them fall, or even conquer, in an unjust cause. Raise the banner of the Church——"

"The banner of the Church!" said Mark, with a mocking laugh.

"What does he say?" whispered a third voice, in French, as a new speaker mingled in the dialogue.

"He talks of the banner of the Church!" said Mark, scoffingly.

"'Oui, parbleu,' if he likes it," replied the Frenchman, laughing; "it smacks somewhat of the middle ages; but the old proverb is right, 'a bad etiquette never spoiled good wine.'"

"Is it then in full canonicals, and with the smoke of censers, we are to march against the Saxon?" said Mark, with a taunting sneer.

"Hear me out, Mark," interrupted the priest; "I didn't say that we were yet prepared even for this; there is much to be done, far more indeed than you wot of. Every expedition insufficiently planned and badly supported, must be a failure; every failure retards the accomplishment of our hopes; such must this enterprise be, if now——'

"Now or never," interposed Mark, as he struck the table violently with his clenched hand—"now, or never, for me at least. You have shown me to these Frenchman, as a fool or worse. One with influence, and yet without a man to back me—with courage, and you tell me to desert them—with the confidence of my countrymen, and I come alone, unaccompanied, unaccredited, to tell my own tale amongst them. What other indignities have you in store for me, or in what other light am I next to figure? But for that, and perhaps you would dare to go further, and say I am not an O'Donoghue;" and in his passion Mark tore open a pocket-book, and held before the old man's eyes the certificate of his baptism, written in the priest's hand. "Yes, you have forced me to speak, of what I ever meant to have buried in my own heart. There it is, read it, and bethink you, how it becomes him who helped to rob me of my inheritance, to despoil me of my honour also."

"You must unsay these words, sir," said the priest in an accent as stern and commanding as Mark's own; "I was never a party to any fraud, nor was I in this country when your father sold his estates."

"I care not how it happened," cried Mark, passionately. "When my own father could do this thing, it matters little to me who were his accomplices;" and he tore the paper in fragments, and scattered them over the floor. "Another and a very different cause brought me here. The French fleet has arrived."

The priest here muttered something in a low tone, to which Mark quietly replied—

"And if they have, it is because their anchors were dragging; you would not have the vessels go ashore on the rocks; the next tide they'll stand up the Bay again. The people that should have been ready to

welcome them, hold back. The whole country round is become suddenly craven; of the hundreds that rallied round me a month since, seventeen appeared this morning, and they were wretches more eager for pillage than the field of honourable warfare. It is come then to this, you either come forth, at once, to harangue the people, and recall them to their sworn allegiance, or the expedition goes on without you—go on it shall."

Here he turned sharply round, and said a few words in French, to which the person addressed replied—

"Certainly; the French Republic does not send a force like this for the benefit of a sea voyage."

"Desert the cause, then," continued Mark, in a tone of denunciation; "desert us, and by G—d, your fate will be worse than that of our more open enemies. To-night the force will land; to-morrow we march all day, aye and all night too: the blazing chapels shall light the way."

"Take care, rash boy, take care; the vengeance of outraged heaven is more terrible than you think of. Whatever be the crime and guilt of others, remember that you are an Irishman; that what the alien may do in recklessness, is sacrilege in him who is the son of the soil."

"Save me, then, from this guilt—save me from myself," cried Mark, in an accent of tender emotion. "I cannot desert this cause, and oh, do not make it one of dishonour to me."

The old man seemed overcome by this sudden appeal to his affections, and made no reply, and the deep breathing of Mark, as his chest heaved in strong emotion, was the only sound in the stillness. Herbert, who had hitherto listened with that vague half consciousness of reality excessive fatigue inflicts, became suddenly aware that the eventful moment was come, when, should the priest falter or hesitate, Mark might succeed in his request, and all hope of rescuing him be lost for ever. With the energy of a desperate resolve he sprang forward, and entered the room just as the priest was about to reply.

"No, Father, no," cried he, wildly; "be firm, be resolute; if this unhappy land is to be the scene of bloodshed, let not her sons be found in opposing ranks."

"This from you, Herbert!" said Mark, reproachfully, as he fixed a cold, stern gaze upon his brother.

"And why not from him," said the priest, hastily. "Is he not an Irishman in heart and spirit? Is not the land as dear to him as to us?"

"I give you joy upon the alliance, Father," said Mark, with a scornful laugh. "Herbert is a Protestant."

"What!—did I hear aright?" said the old man, as with a face pale as death, he tottered forwards, and caught the youth by either arm. "Is this true, Herbert? Tell me, boy, this instant, that it is not so."

"It is true, sir, most true; and if I have hitherto spared you the pain it might occasion you, believe me it was not from any shame the avowal might cost *me*."

The priest staggered back, and fell heavily into a chair; a livid hue spread itself over his features, and his eyes grew glassy and lustreless.

"We may well be wretched and miserable," exclaimed he with a faint sigh, "when false to heaven, who is to wonder that we are traitors to each other."

The French officer—for such he was—muttered some words into Mark's ear, who replied—

"I cannot blame you for feeling impatient; this is no time for fooling. Now for the glen. Farewell, Father. Herbert, we'll meet again soon;" and without waiting to hear more, he hastened from the room with his companion.

Herbert stood for a second or two undecided. He wished to say something, yet knew not what, or how. At last approaching the old man's chair, he said—

"There is yet time to avert the danger; the people are irresolute—many actually averse to the rising; my brother will fall by his rashness."

"Better to do so than survive in dishonour," said the priest, snatching rudely away his hand from Herbert's grasp. "Leave me, young man—go; this is a poor and an humble roof; but never till now has it sheltered the apostate."

"I never thought I should hear these words, here," said Herbert, mildly; "but I cannot part from you in anger."

"There was a time when you never left me without my blessing, Herbert," said the priest, his eyes swimming in tears as he spoke; "kneel now, my child."

Herbert knelt at the priest's feet, when placing his hand on the young man's head, he muttered a fervent prayer over him, saying, as he concluded—

"And may He who knows all hearts, direct and guide yours, and bring you back from your wanderings, if you have strayed from truth."

He kissed the young man's forehead, and then covering his eyes with his hands, sat lost in his own sorrowful thoughts.

At this moment Herbert heard his name whispered by a voice without; he stole silently from the room, and on reaching the little

porch, found Kerry O'Leary, who, wet through and wearied, had reached the cottage, after several hours' endeavour to cross the water-courses, swollen into torrents by the rain.

"A letter from Carrig-na-curra, sir," said Kerry; for heartily sick of his excursion, he adopted the expedient of pretending to mistake to which brother the letter was addressed, and thus at once terminate his unpleasant mission.

The note began, "My dear son;" and, without the mention of a name, simply entreated his immediate return home. Thither Herbert felt both duty and inclination called him, and without a moment's delay left the cottage, and, accompanied by Kerry, set out for Carrig-na-curra.

The night was dark and starless, as they plodded onward, and as the rain ceased, the wind grew stronger, while for miles inland the roaring of the sea could be heard like deep continuous thunder. Herbert, too much occupied with his own thoughts, seldom spoke, nor did Kerry, exhausted as he felt himself, often break silence as they went. As they drew near the castle, however, a figure crossed the road, and advancing towards them said—

"Good night."

"Who could that be, Kerry?" said Herbert, as the stranger passed on.

"I know the voice well," said Kerry, "though he thought to disguise it. That's Sam Wylie, and it's not for any thing good he's here."

Scarcely were the words spoken, when four fellows sprang down upon and seized them.

"This is our man," said one of the party, as he held Herbert by the collar, with a grasp there was no resisting; "but secure the other also."

Herbert's resistance was vain, although spiritedly made, and stifling his cries for aid, they carried him along for some little distance to a spot, where a chaise was standing with four mounted dragoons on either side. Into this he was forced, and seated between two men in plain clothes, the word was given to start.

"You know your orders if a rescue be attempted," said a voice, Herbert at once knew to be Hemsworth's.

The answer was lost in the noise of the wheels; for already the horses were away at the top of their speed, giving the escort all they could do to keep up beside them.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE DAY OF RECKONING.

NEVER had the O'Donoghue and Kate passed a day of more painful anxiety, walking from window to window, whenever a view of the glen might be obtained, or listening to catch among the sounds of the storm for something that should announce Mark's return; their fears increased as the hours stole by, and yet no sign of his coming appeared.

The old castle shook to its very foundations, as the terrific gale tore along the glen, and the occasional crash of some old fragment of masonry, would be heard high above the roaring wind—while in the road beneath were scattered branches of trees, slates, and tiles, all evidencing the violence of the hurricane. Under shelter of the great rock, a shivering flock of mountain sheep were gathered, with here and there amidst them a heifer or a wild pony, all differences of habit merged in the common instinct of safety. Within doors every thing looked sad and gloomy; the kitchen, where several country people, returning from the market, had assembled, waiting in the vain hope of a favourable moment to proceed homeward, did not present any of its ordinary signs of gaiety. There was no pleasant sound of happy voices; no laughter, no indulgence in the hundred little narratives of personal adventure by which the peasant can beguile the weary time. They all sat around the turf fire, either silent, or conversing in low cautious whispers, while Mrs. Branagan herself smoked her pipe in a state of moody dignity, that added its shade of awe to the solemnity of the scene.

It was a strange feature of the converse, nor would it be worth to mention here, save as typifying the wonderful caution and reserve of the people in times of difficulty; but no one spoke of the "rising," nor did any allude, except distantly, to the important military preparations going forward at Macroom. The fear of treachery was at the moment universal; the dread that informers were scattered widely through the land, prevailed everywhere, and the appearance of a stranger, or of a man from a distant part of the country, was always enough to silence all free and confidential intercourse. So it was now—none spoke of anything but the dreadful storm—the injury it might do the country—how the floods would carry away a bridge here, or a mill there,

what roads would be impassable—what rivers would no longer be fordable—some had not yet drawn home their turf from the bog, and were now in despair of ever reaching it—another had left his hay in a low callow, and never expected to see it again—while a few, whose speculations took a wider field ventured to expatiate on the terrible consequences of the gale at sea, a topic which when suggested led to many a sorrowful tale of shipwreck on the coast.

It was while they were thus, in low and muttering voices, talking over these sad themes, that Kate, unable any longer to endure the suspense of silent watching, descended the stairs, and entered the kitchen, to try and learn there some tidings of events. The people stood up respectfully as she came forward, and while each made his or her humble obeisance, a muttered sound ran through them, in Irish, of wonder and astonishment at her grace and beauty; for, whatever be the privations of the Irish peasant, however poor and humble his lot in life, two faculties pertain to him like instincts—a relish for drollery, and an admiration for beauty—these are claims that ever find acknowledgment from him, and in his enjoyment of either, he can forget himself, and all the miseries of his condition. The men gazed on her as something more than mortal, the character of her features heightened by costume strange to their eyes, seemed to astonish almost as much as it captivated them—while the women, with more critical discernment, examined her more composedly, but, perhaps, with not less admiration; Mrs. Branagan, at the same time throwing a proud glance around, as though to say, "You didn't think to see the likes of that, in these parts."

Kate happened on this occasion to look more than usually handsome. With a coquetry it is not necessary to explain, she had dressed herself most becomingly, and in that style which distinctly marks a French woman—the only time in his life Mark had ever remarked her costume was when she wore this dress, and she had not forgotten the criticism.

"I didn't mean to disturb you," said Kate, with her slightly foreign accent; "pray sit down again—well, then, I must leave you, if you won't—every one let's me have my own way—is it not true, Mrs. Branagan?"

Mrs. Branagan's reply was quite lost in the general chorus of the others, as she said—

"And why wouldn't you, God bless you for a raal beauty!" while a powerful looking fellow, with dark beard and whiskers, struck his stick violently against the ground, and cried out in his enthusiasm—

"Let me see the man that would say agin it—that's all."

Kate smiled at the speaker, not all ungrateful for such rude chivalry, and went on—"I wanted to hear if you have any news from the town —was there any stir among the troops, or anything extraordinary going forward there?"

Each looked at the other as if unwilling to take the reply upon himself, when at last an old man, with a head as white as snow, answered—

"Yes, my lady, the soldiers is all under arms since nine o'clock, then came news that the French was in the Bay, and the army was sent for to Cork."

"No, 'tis Limerick I heerd say," cried another.

"Limerick indeed! sorra bit, 'tis from Dublin they're comin wid cannons; but it's no use, for the French is sailed off again as quick as they come."

"The French fleet gone!—left the Bay—surely you must mistake," said Kate, eagerly.

"Faix, I won't be sure, my lady; but here's Tom M'Carthy seen them going away, a little after twelve o'clock."

The man thus appealed to, seemed in nowise satisfied with the allusions to him, and threw a quick distrustful look around, as though far from feeling content with the party before whom he should explain, a feeling that increased considerably as every eye was now turned towards him.

Kate, with a ready tact that never failed her, saw his difficulty, and approaching close to where he stood, said, in a voice only audible by himself——

"Tell me what you saw in the Bay, do not have any fear of *me*."

M'Carthy, who was dressed in the coarse blue jacket of a fisherman, possessed that sharp intelligence so often found among those of his calling, and seemed at once to have his mind relieved by this mark of confidence.

"I was in the boat, my lady," said he, "that rowed Master Mark out to the French frigate, and waited for him alongside to bring him back. He was more than an hour on board talking with the officers, sometimes down in the cabin, and moretimes up on the quarter-deck, where there was a fierce-looking man, with a blue uniform, lying on a white skin—a white bear, Master Mark tould me it was. The officer was wounded in the leg before he left France, and the sea voyage made it bad again, but, for all that, he laughed and joked away like the others."

"And they were laughing then, and in good spirits?" said Kate.

"'Tis that you may call it. I never heerd such pleasant gentlemen before, and the sailors too was just the same—sorra bit would sarve them, but making us drink a bottle of rum apiece, for luck, I suppose—devil a one had a sorrowful face on him but Master Mark, whatever was the matter with him, he wouldn't eat anything either, and the only glass of wine he drank, you'd think it was poison, the face he made at it—more bytoken he flung the glass overboard when he finished it. And to be sure the Frenchmen weren't in fault, they treated him like a brother—one would be shaking hands wid him—another wid his arm round his shoulders, and"—here Tom blushed and stammered, and at last stopped dead short.

"Well, go on, what were you going to say?"

"Faix, I'm ashamed then—but 'tis true enough—saving your presence, I saw two of them kiss him."

Kate could not help laughing at Tom's astonishment at this specimen of French greeting—while for the first time, perhaps, did the feeling of the peasant occur to herself, and the practice she had often witnessed abroad, without remark, became suddenly repugnant to her delicacy.

"And did Master Mark come back alone," asked she, after a minute's hesitation.

"No, my lady, there was a little dark man wid gould epaulettes, and a sword on him, that came too. I heerd them call him, Mr. Morris, but sorra word of English or Irish he had."

"And where did they land, and which way did they take afterwards?"

"I put them ashore at Glengariff, and they had horses there to take them up the country. I heerd they were going first to Father Rourke's in the glen."

"And then, after that?"

"Sorra a one of me knows. I never set eyes on them since—I was trying to get a warp out for one of the French ships, for the anchors was dragging—they came to the wrong side of the island, and got into the north channel, and that was the reason they had to cut their cables and stand out to sea till the gale is over, but there's not much chance of that for some time."

Kate did not speak for several minutes, and at length said—

"The people, tell me of them, were they in great numbers along the coast, were there a great many of them with Mr. Mark when he came down to the shore?"

"I'll tell you no lie, my lady; there was not—there was some boys from Castletown, and down thereabouts, but the O'Learys and the Sul-

livans, the M'Carthys—my own people—and the Neals wasn't there; and sure enough it was no wonder if Master Mark was angry, when he looked about and saw the fellows was following him. 'Be off,' says he, 'away wid ye, 'tis for pillage and robbery the likes of ye comes down here—if the men that should have heart and courage in the cause won't come forward, I'll never head ruffians like you to replace them.' Them's the words he said, and hard words they were."

"Poor fellow," said Kate, as she wiped away a tear from her eye, "none stand by him, not one, "And why is this the case," asked she, eagerly, "have the people grown faint-hearted—are there cowards amongst them?"

"There's as bad," said M'Carthy, in a low, cautious whisper—"there's traitors, that would rather earn blood money, than live honestly—there's many a one among them scheming to catch Master Mark himself, and he is lucky if he escapes at last."

"There's horses now, coming up the road, and fast they're coming too," said one of the country people, and the quick clattering of a gallop could be heard along the plashy road.

Kate's heart beat almost audibly, and she bounded from the spot, and up the stairs. The noise of the approaching horses came nearer, and at last stopped before the door.

"It is him—it is Mark," said she to herself, in an ecstasy of delight, and with trembling fingers withdrew the heavy bolt, and undid the chain, while, with an effort of strength the emergency alone conferred, she threw wide the massive door, clasped and framed with iron.

"Oh, how I have watched for you," exclaimed she, as a figure, dismounting hastily, advanced towards her, and the same instant the voice revealed Hemsworth, as he said—

"If I could think this greeting were indeed meant for me, Miss O'Donoghue, I should call this moment the happiest of my life."

"I thought it was my cousin," said Kate, as almost fainting, she fell back into a seat, "but you may have tidings of him, can you tell if he is safe?"

"I expected to have heard this intelligence from you," said he, as recovering from the chagrin of his disappointment, he resumed his habitual deference of tone; "has he not returned?"

"No, we have not seen him, nor has the messenger yet come back. Herbert also is away, and we are here alone."

As Hemsworth offered her his arm to return to the drawing-room, he endeavoured to reassure her on the score of Mark's safety, while he hinted that the French, who that morning had entered Bantry Bay with

eleven vessels, unprepared for the active reception his measures had provided, had set sail again, either to await the remainder of the fleet, or perhaps return to France; "I would not wish to throw blame on those whose misfortune is already heavy, but I must tell you, Miss O'Donoghue, that every step of this business has been marked by duplicity and cowardice. I, of course, need not say, that in either of these, your friends stand guiltless, but your cousin has been a dupe throughout; the dupe of every one who thought it worth his while to trick and deceive him—he believed himself in the confidence of the leaders of the expedition—they actually never heard of his name. He thought himself in a position of trust and influence—he is not recognized by any—unnoticed by his own party, and unacknowledged by the French, his only notoriety will be the equivocal one of martyrdom."

Every word of this speech, uttered in a voice of sad, regretful meaning, as though the speaker were sorrowing over the mistaken opinions of a dear friend, cut deeply into Kate's heart—she knew not well at the instant, whether she should not better have faced actual danger for her cousin, than have seen him thus deceived and played upon. Hemsworth saw the effect his words created, and went on—

"Would that the danger rested here, and that the fate of one rash, but high-spirited boy, was all that hung on the crisis"—as he spoke he threw a cautious look around the roomy apartment to see that they were, indeed, alone.

"Great Heaven! there is not surely worse than this in store for us," cried Kate, in a voice of heartrending affliction.

"There is far worse, Miss O'Donoghue; the ruin that threatens is that of a whole house—a noble and honoured name—your uncle is unhappily no stranger to these mischievous intentions—I was slow to put faith in the assertion."

"It is false—I know it is false," said Kate, passionately—"My poor dear uncle, overwhelmed with many calamities, has borne up patiently and nobly, but of any participation in schemes of danger or enterprize he is incapable—think of his age—his infirmity."

"I am aware of both, young lady, but I am also aware that for years past, his pecuniary difficulties have been such that he would hesitate at nothing which should promise the chance of extrication. Many have imagined like him, that even a temporary triumph over England would lead to some new settlement between the two countries, concessions of one kind or other, laws revoked and repealed, and confiscations withdrawn; nor were the expectations, perhaps, alto-

gether unfounded. Little has ever been accorded to Ireland as a grace—much has been obtained by her by menace."

"He never calculated on such an issue to the struggle, sir; depend upon it, no unworthy prospect of personal gain ever induced an O'Donoghue to adopt a cause like this. You have convinced me, now, that he is unconnected with this plot."

"I sincerely wish my own convictions could follow yours, madam, but it is an ungrateful office I have undertaken. Would to heaven I knew how to discharge it more fittingly. To be plain, Miss O'Donoghue, the statute of high treason, which will involve the confiscation of your uncle's estate, will, if measures be not speedily taken, rob you of your fortune; to prevent this—

"Stay, sir, I may save you some trouble on my account. I have no fortune, nor any claim upon my uncle's estate."

"Pardon me, young lady, but the circumstance of my position has made me acquainted with matters connected with your family; your claim extends to a very considerable, and a very valuable property."

"Once more, sir, I must interrupt you—I have none."

"If I dare contradict you I would say——"

"Nay, nay, sir," cried she, blushing, partly from shame, and partly from anger—"this must cease, I know not what right you have to press the avowal from me. The property you speak of is no longer mine; my uncle did me the honour to accept it from me, would that the gift could express the thousandth part of the love I bear him."

"You gave over your claim to your uncle!" said Hemsworth, leaving a pause between every word of the sentence, while a look of malignant anger settled on his brow.

"Who dares to question me on such a subject," said Kate, for the insulting expression so suddenly assumed by Hemsworth, roused all her indignation.

"Is this, then, really so," said Hemsworth, who, so unaccustomed as he ever was to be overreached, felt all the poignancy of a deception in his disappointment.

Kate made no answer, but moved towards the door, while Hemsworth sprang forward before her, and placed his back against it.

"What means this, or how comes it, that you dare to treat me thus beneath my uncle's roof?"

"One word only, Miss O'Donoghue," said Hemsworth, with an effort to assume his habitual tone of deference; "May I ask was this transfer of property made legally and formally."

"Sir," said Kate, as drawing herself up, she stared full at him, without another word of reply.

"I see it all," said Hemsworth, rapidly, and as if thinking, aloud. "This was the money that paid off Hickson—in this way the mortgage was redeemed, and the bond for two thousand also recovered—duped and cheated at every step. And so, madam,"—here he turned a look of insulting menace towards her—"I have been the fool in your hands all this time; and not content with thwarting my views, you have endeavoured to sap the source of my fortune. Yes, you need not affect ignorance; I know of Sir Archibald's kind interference in my behalf: Sir Marmaduke Travers has withdrawn his agency from me; he might have paused to inquire where was the property from which he has removed me—how much of it owns him the master, or me. This was your uncle's doing. I have it under his own hand, and the letter addressed to yourself."

"And you dared, sir, to break the seal of my letter!"

"I did more, madam—I sent a copy of it to the Secretary of State, whose warrant I possess: the young officials of the Home Office will, doubtless, thank me for the amusement I have afforded them in its contents. The match-making talents of Sir Archy and his niece's fascinations have, however, failed for once. The Guardsman seems to have got over his short-lived passion."

"Stand back, sir, and let me pass."

"One moment more, madam; if I have suffered some injuries from your family, I have at least one debt of gratitude to acknowledge—but for your note, written by your own hand, I should scarcely have succeeded in capturing a rebel, whose treason will not long await its penalty—but for your able assistance, your cousin might have escaped—indeed, it may be worth while to inform you that Sir Archibald had good hopes of obtaining his pardon, a circumstance which will, doubtless, be satisfactory to the surviving members of the family."

"My cousin Mark taken!" cried Kate, as she clasped her hands to either side of her head in a paroxysm of agony.

"Taken, and on his way to Dublin, under a military escort; on Wednesday he will be tried by court-martial: I hope and trust on Thursday—but perhaps it would be cruel to tell you of Thursday's proceedings."

Kate reeled, and endeavoured to support herself by a chair; but a sickness like death crept over her, and with a faint low sigh she sank lifeless on the floor; at the same instant the door was burst open by a tremendous effort, and Hemsworth sent forward into the room. It

was Mark, splashed and dripping, his face flushed with violent exertion, that entered. With one glance at Hemsworth, and another at the fainting form before him, he seemed to divine all.

"Our day of reckoning is come at last, sir," said he, in a low distinct voice; "it has been somewhat tardy, however."

"If you have any claim on me, Mr. O'Donoghue," said Hemsworth, with a forced calmness, "I am ready, at the proper time and place, to offer you every satisfaction."

"That time and place is here, sir," said Mark, as without the slightest sign of passion he bolted the door, and drew a heavy table across it. "Here, in this room, from which both of us shall never walk forth alive."

"Take care, sir, what you do; I am armed," said Hemsworth, as he threw a quick glance around, to see if any hope of escape should present itself.

"And so am I," said Mark, coolly, who still busied himself in removing every object from the middle of the room, while gently lifting Kate, he laid her, still unconscious as she was, upon a sofa.

"We have neither of us much time to throw away, I fancy," said he, with a bitter laugh; "choose your place now, sir, and fire when you please—mine is yonder;" and as he spoke he turned half round to walk towards the spot indicated. With the quickness of lightning, Hemsworth seized the moment, and drawing a pistol from his bosom, aimed and fired; the ball grazed Mark's shoulder, and made him stagger forwards; but in a second he recovered himself: the casualty saved him; for while falling, a second bullet whizzed after the first. With a cry of vengeance that made the old walls ring again, Mark sprang at him; it was the deadly leap of a tiger on his prey; the impulse was such, that as he caught him in his arms, both rolled over together on the floor. The struggle was but brief; Mark, superior in youth, strength, and activity, soon got him under, and with his knee upon his chest, pinioned him down to the ground. There was a pause, the only sounds being the quick-drawn breathings of both, as with looks of hate they gazed at each other;—while with one hand he grasped Hemsworth by the throat, with the other he felt for his pistol: slowly he drew forth the weapon, and cocked it; then laying the cold muzzle upon the other's forehead, he pressed the trigger; the cock snapped, but the priming burned. He flung the weapon from him in passion, and drew another; but ere he could adjust it, Hemsworth ceased to breathe; a cold livid colour spread over his features, and a clammy sweat bedewed his forehead—he had fainted.

Mark dropped the uplifted weapon, as he muttered—"It was a fitting fate—the death of a coward." Then standing up, he approached the window that overlooked the road, and threw it wide open. The storm still blew with all its force, and in a second extinguished the lights in the room, leaving all in darkness. With cautious steps, Mark moved towards where the body lay, and lifting it in his powerful arms, carried it towards the window; with one vigorous effort he hurled the lifeless form from him, and the heavy mass was heard as it fell crashing among the brushwood that covered the precipice.

Mark gazed for a few seconds into the black abyss beneath, and then withdrawing, he closed the window, and barred it. By the aid of his pistol he struck a light, and relighted the candles, and then approached the sofa where Kate lay.

"Have I been ill, Mark?" said she, as she touched his hand—"have I been ill, and dreaming a horrid dream? I thought Hemsworth was here, and that—that—but he was here—I know it now—you met him here. Oh, Mark, dearest Mark, what has happened—where is he?"

Mark pointed to the window, but never spoke.

"Is he killed—did you kill him?" cried she, as her eyes grew wild with the expression of terror. "Oh, merciful heaven, who has visited us so heavily, why will reason remain when madness would be mercy! You have killed him!"

"He did not die by my hand, though he well deserved to have done so," said Mark, sternly; but are our hours to be so many now, that we can waste them on such a theme. The French are in the Bay—at least a portion of the fleet—sixteen vessels, nine of which are ships of the line, are holding by their anchors beneath our cliffs; twenty more are at sea, or wrecked or captured by the English, for who can tell the extent of our disasters. All is against us; but against all we might succeed, if we had not traitors amongst us."

"The Government is aware of the plot, Mark—knows every man engaged in it, and is fully prepared to meet your advance."

"Such is the rumour; but there's no truth in it: the people hold back, and give this as the excuse for their cowardice. The priests will not harangue them, and the panic spreads every moment wider, of treachery and betrayal. Lanty Lawler, the fellow who should have supplied horses for the artillery, is an informer; so are half the others. There's nothing for it but a bold plunge—something to put every neck in the halter, and then will come the spirit to meet all difficulties—so thinks Tone, and he's a noble-hearted fellow, and ready for any peril."

A loud knocking at the door of the tower now broke in upon the converse, and Kerry O'Leary called aloud—

"Open the door, Master Mark; be quick, the soldiers is comin'."

Mark speedily withdrew the heavy table from its place across the door, and opened it. Kerry, his clothes reduced to rags, and his face and hands bleeding, stood before him, terror in every feature. "They took me prisoner at the gate there, but I contrived to slip away, and took to the mountain, and a fine chase they gave me for the last hour——"

"But the soldiers—where are they, and in what place?"

"There's two troops of horse about a mile below Mary's in the glen, waiting for Hemsworth's orders to advance."

"Go on," said Mark, with a stern smile; "they're not likely to move for some time."

"I do not know that, then," said Kerry, "for I saw Hemsworth pass up the road, with two men holding him on his horse; he seemed to have got a bad fall, for the blood was running down his face, and his cheeks was as pale as a corpse."

"You saw Hemsworth, and he was living!"

"Faix he was, and no doubt of it; there never was the man in these parts could curse and swear the way he does, barrin' himself, and I heerd him blasphaming away as he went along what he wouldn't do down here."

"Oh, fly, Mark; don't lose a second, for heaven's sake——"

"And leave you here to the mercy of this scoundrel and his bloodhounds."

"No, no; we are safe here; he dare not wreak his vengeance on us; but you are his greatest enemy."

"'Tis thrue she's sayin'," cried Kerry, eagerly; "I heerd Hemsworth say to Sam Wylie, that Captain Travers is up at Macroom with his regiment, and was coming down to guard the castle here; but that there was plenty of time to take you before he came, and there was a tree standing to hang you, besides."

"I leave you, then, in safe keeping," said Mark, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice; "one word of good-bye to my father, and I am gone."

It was some moments before the O'Donoghue could rally from the deep stupor grief and anxiety induced, and recognize Mark as he leaned over his chair; and then as he felt his hands and clutched his arms, he seemed endeavouring to persuade himself that it was not some passing dream he laboured under.

"The pursuit is too hot, father," said Mark, after two or three

efforts to arouse his mind to what was going forward, "and I must be off. Hemsworth has a strong party in the glen; but fear nothing; he cannot molest you; and, besides, his time is brief now."

"And will you leave me, Mark; will you desert me now?" said the old man, with all the selfishness of age, forgetting every thing, save his own feelings.

"Not if you wish me to remain; if you think there is more honour in my being taken prisoner under your own roof, I'm just as willing."

"Oh, no, uncle," cried Kate, rushing forward; "do not keep him; say good-bye, and speedily; the dragoons are advancing already."

"There goes a shot! that was a cannon," cried Mark, in ecstasy, as he lifted his hand to catch the sound—"another! another! they're landing—they're coming—you'll see me again before day-break, father," said he, embracing the old man tenderly, while he turned to bid Kate adieu. She stood with her hands before her eyes, her bosom heaving violently. Mark gazed at her for a moment, and pressing his lips to her cheek, merely whispered one word, and was gone.

Hemsworth's horse, which Kerry had found in the stable, stood ready awaiting Mark, and without a moment's loss of time, he sprung on the animal's back, and dashed down the road at full speed. Meanwhile the loud firing of cannon continued at intervals towards the Bay, and more than one rocket was seen to throw its bright glare through the blackness of the night.

"They're landing at last," cried Mark, as every report set his heart bounding with eager hope, and forward he rode through the storm.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE GLEN AND THE BAY.

KERRY O'LEARY's intelligence was correct in every particular. Hemsworth was not only living, but, save some bruises, and a cut upon his forehead, was little the worse for his adventure. The brushwood had caught him in his descent, and broken the fall; and although the height was considerable, when he reached the ground he was merely stunned,

and not seriously injured. After a little time he was able to walk, and had succeeded in advancing about half a mile up the glen, when he was met by Wylie and a party of his followers, returning after escorting the chaise some miles on the road.

Neither our space nor our inclination permit us to dwell on the scene that followed, where Hemsworth, outwitted and duped as he believed himself, gave way to the most violent passion, accusing every one in turn of treachery, and vowing a deep and bloody vengeance on the whole House of O'Donoghue.

Seated on Wylie's horse, and supported on each side by two men—for at first his weakness increased, as he found himself in the saddle—he went along at a foot's pace. He would not listen to Wylie's proposal of returning to the "Lodge," but constantly called out—"To Keim-an-eigh as fast as possible—to the dragoons!" and at last passion had so far supplied energy, that he was able to press on faster, when suddenly a twinkling light through the gloom apprised him that he was near the little way-side inn.

"Get me some wine, Wylie, and be quick!" cried he, as they reached the door.

"You had better get off, and rest a few moments, sir," said the other.

"Rest!—I'll never rest," shouted he, with an infamous oath, "till I see that fellow waving from the gallows! Some wine this instant!"

To the loud summons of Wylie no answer was returned, and the light that shone so brightly a moment before was now extinguished.

"Break open the door! B—t you! what do you delay about?" shouted Hemsworth. "There are some rebel tricks at work here."

At the same instant the light re-appeared, and Mary's voice was heard from within—

"Who's that, at this hour of the night, making such a noise?"

"Open the door, and be d——d to you!" cried Hemsworth, who, having got off his horse, was now endeavouring with his foot to force the strong door.

"It will take a better man than you to stave that pannel in," said Mary, who, although recognizing the voice, affected not to know the speaker. And she said truly, the door once made part of the rudder of an Indiaman, and was strong oak belted with iron.

"Put a light in the thatch! Snap your pistol, Wylie, and set fire to it!" cried Hemsworth, savagely; for any opposition to him at this moment called forth all the malignity of his nature.

"Oh, is it you, captain?" said Mary, with a voice of well-affected respect; "the Lord pardon me for keeping you out in the cold!" and with that she opened the door, and with many a low curtsey saluted her guest.

Rudely pushing her aside, and muttering an oath, Hemsworth entered the cabin, followed by the others.

"Why was the light put out," said he, "when you heard us knocking at the door?"

"I did not hear the knocking," said Mary. "I was in the little room there, and goin' to bed. The saints be good to me!—since the soldiers were here, the hearing is knocked out of me—the noise and the ballyragging they went on with, from mornin' till night!—and now that they are gone—thanks to your honour, that ordered them away two days ago up to 'the Lodge'—I do be thinking, they are here still."

"Bring us some wine," said Hemsworth, "and the best in your house. You need not spare the tap to-night, for it's the last you will ever draw beneath this roof. There;—don't look surprised and innocent;—you know well what I mean. This is a rebel den, but I will leave it a heap of ashes before I quit the spot."

"You'll not burn my little place down, captain?" said Mary, with a look, in which a shrewd observer might have read a very different expression than that of fear. "You'll not take away the means I have of earning my bread?"

"Bring the wine, woman; and if you don't wish to wait for the bonfire, be off with you up the glen. I'll leave a mark on this spot as a good warning to traitors. People shall talk of it hereafter, and point to it as the place where rebellion met its first lesson."

"And who dares to say that there was any treason in this house?"

"If my oath," said Wylie, "won't satisfy you, Mrs. M'Kelly——"

"Yours!" interrupted Mary;—"yours!—a transported felon's oath!"

"What do you think of your old sweetheart, Lanty Lawler?" said Hemsworth, as he drank off goblet after goblet of the strong wine. "Wouldn't you think twice about refusing him now, if you knew the price it was to cost you?"

"I would rather see my bones as black as his own traitor's heart," cried Mary, with flashing eyes, "than I would take a villain like that! There, captain, there's the best of the cellar, and there's the house for you, and there," said she, throwing herself on her knees, "and there's

the curse of the lone woman that you turn out this night upon the road, without a roof to shelter her, and may it light on you now, and follow you hereafter!"

"Clear your throat, and cool it, after your hot wishes," said Hemsworth, with a brutal laugh; for in this ebullition of the woman's passion was the first moment of his enjoyment.

With a gesture of menace, and a denunciation uttered in Irish, with all the energy the native language possesses, Mary turned into the road, and left her home for ever.

"What was that she said?" said Hemsworth, turning to one of the men that stood behind the chair.

"It was a saying they do have in Irish, sir," said the fellow, with a simper, "and the meaning of it is, that it isn't them that lights a bonfire, that waits to dance round the ashes."

"Ha! that was a threat, then! She will bring the rebels on us;—but I have taken good care for that. I have sent a strong party by the other road, to cut off their advance from the Bay, and we'll hear the firing time enough to warn us; and that party," said Hemsworth, muttering to himself, "should be at their post by this time;" here he looked at his watch: "it is now eleven o'clock; you took the order, Wylie, for Captain Travers to go round by Googawn Barra, and occupy the pass between Carrig-na-curra and Bantry Bay?"

"I did, sir, and he set off the moment I gave the letter."

"Then the fellow, Mark, cannot escape me," said Hemsworth. "If he leave the castle before I come, he falls into the hands of the others. Still, I would rather be judge and jury myself, and you shall be the hangman, Sam. There's little love between you: it is an office you'll like well."

"If I don't do it nate," said Wylie, "the young gentleman must forgive me, as it is my first time;" and they both laughed heartily at the ruffian jest.

"But what are we staying for?" said Hemsworth, while he drained his glass. "Let us get up the dragoons, and make sure of him at once. I am strong now, and ready for any exertion."

"'Tis a pity to burn the little place, captain," said one of the fellows of the party. "There's many a dacent boy would think himself well off, to get the likes of it for his reward."

"Make yourself at home," said Hemsworth, "for I'll give you a lease for three lives of it—yours, Wylie's, and mine own—will that satisfy you?"

The fellow stared at the speaker, and then looked at Wylie, as if not knowing whether to place any faith in the words he heard.

"I didn't say you were to get the premises in good repair, however," said Hemsworth, with a bitter laugh, "I didn't boast much about the roof," and at the same moment he took a lighted turf from the hearth, and thrust it into the thatch, while Wylie, to curry favour with his patron, imitated his example."

"Where does that door lead to?" said Hemsworth, pointing to the small portal, which led into the rock towards the stable.

"That's the way to the stable," said Wylie, as he opened it, and looked down the passage; "and here's another door, that I never saw before."

"That's where she do keep the spirits, sir," said one of the men; "'tis there she do have all the liquor."

"There's nothing like whiskey for a blaze," said Hemsworth, with a half drunken laugh. "Burst open that door!"—but all their efforts were vain: it was made with every precaution of strength, and studded over with strong nails.

"Stop!" said Hemsworth, as he pushed the others rudely away, "there's a readier plan than yours to force it. I'll blow the lock to pieces!" and, so saying, he took the pistol from Wylie's hand, and, having leisurely examined the priming and the flint, placed the muzzle in the lock.

"Be quick, sir, be quick!" said Wylie; "the place is filling with smoke!"

And so it was: the crackling of the thatch, and the dense masses of black smoke that filled the cabin, showed that the work of destruction was begun.

"Here, then: this is to put the seal to your lease, Peter," said Hemsworth, as he pulled the trigger.

A quick report followed, and then a crashing sound, as of splintered timber, and, sudden as the lightning flash itself, a noise burst forth louder than thunder, and at the same moment the house, and all that were in it, were blown into the air, while the massive rock was shattered from its base, full fifty feet up above the road. Report after report followed, each accompanied by some new and fearful explosion, until at length a great portion of the cliff was rent asunder, and scattered in huge fragments across the road, where, amid the crumbling masonry and the charred rafters, lay four black and lifeless bodies, without a trait which should distinguish one from the other.

All was silent on the spot, but through every glen in the mountains the echoing sounds sent back in redoubled peals the thunder of that dreadful explosion, and through many a far-off valley rung out that last requiem over the dead.

For some time the timbers and the thatch continued to burn, emitting at intervals lurid bursts of flame, as more combustible matter met the fire, while now and then a great report, and a sudden explosion, would announce that some hitherto untouched store of powder became ignited, until, as day was breaking, the flames waned and died out, leaving the rent rocks and the ruined cabin the sad memorials of the event.

Nor were these the only occurrences of which the glen was that night the witness. Mark, his brain burning for the moment when the fray should commence, rode on amid the storm, the crashing branches and the loud brawling torrents seeming to arouse the wild spirit within him, and lash his enthusiasm even to madness. The deafening clamour of the hurricane increased, as he came nearer the Bay, where the sea, storm-lashed and swollen, beat on the rocks with a din like artillery.

But louder far than all other sounds were the minute peals of cannon from the Bay, making the deep valleys ring with their clangour, and sending their solemn din into many a far-off glen.

"They are coming! they are coming!" cried Mark, as he bounded madly in his saddle. "What glorious music have they for their march!"

"Stop!—pull in!—hould hard, Master Mark!" screamed a voice from the side of the road, as a fellow jumped from a cliff, and made towards the rider.

"Don't delay me now, Terry; I cannot stay," said Mark, as he recognised the youth, "the French are landing!"

"They are not!" cried Terry, with a yell of despair; "they are going off, leaving us for ever, and the glen is full of soldiers. The dragoons is there; ay, not half a mile from you," as he pointed through the gloom in the direction of the glen.

"The dragoons there!—what treachery is this?"

"I saw them coming round the head of the lake this evening, and I thought it was after me they were coming; but they never turned off the road, but went on to the gap of the glen, and there they are now, waiting, I suppose, for the French to go."

"The French are not going, fool!—they are landing! Don't you hear the guns—there! and there again! There is but one way now, but a bold heart needs no more. Let go the bridle, Terry."

"I can't, I won't let go. 'Tis cut to pieces you'll be. I seen them looking at their swords a while ago. Och, don't twist my hand that way!"

"Leave me free! There is no such armour of proof as recklessness!"

As he spake, he reined in his horse, and, dashing the spurs into his flanks, sprang beyond Terry, and the next moment was out of sight. A very few minutes showed that Terry was but too accurate. Around a blazing fire, beneath the rock, a party of dragoons were dismounted, vainly seeking to dry their soaked clothes, while in front two mounted men could be seen with their carbines unslung, ready for action.

A bold dash to force his way through was the only chance remaining. To depend on his horse's speed, and his own dexterous hand to guide him, was all his hope. He resolved, therefore, neither to draw sword nor pistol, but attempt to pass by sheer horsemanship. Few men were either better suited for a venture so daring, or better equipped at the moment. The animal he rode was a powerful thoroughbred, trained and managed to perfection.

Without the slightest noise Mark dismounted, and, ungirthing his saddle, re-adjusted and fastened it further back. He then looked carefully to his bridle, to see all was safe there, and loosened the curb, to give the horse free play of his head. This done, and with his cap pressed firmly down upon his brow, he sprang into his saddle once more.

The bright blaze enabled him to see the party in front, and, while he himself escaped all observation, to devise his plans at leisure. He advanced, therefore, at a slow walk, keeping the horse's feet in the deep ground, where no noise was made. He counted seven figures around the fire, and two as sentinels, and suspected at once that the whole party was not there. Still there was no other chance. To attempt the mountain would delay him a day at least, and a day now was a life-time. Creeping noiselessly forward, he came within a few yards of the outposts, and could distinctly hear the voices as they talked together. He halted for a second or two, and looked back down the glen. It was an involuntary action, for even had all not been dark around him, his home, to which he wished to bid a last adieu, was out of sight.

A cannon-shot rung out at the instant, and, taking it for a signal, Mark reined in his horse sharply, and then, dashing the spurs to his sides, made him plunge madly forward, and, with the bound, shot through the space between the two sentinels, each of whom presented, but feared to fire, lest he should injure his comrade.

"Come on—follow me!" cried Mark, waving his hand as if encouraging others on, and the action turned every look down the glen, in the direction from whence he came, and whence now came a wild, shrill yell, the most savage and appalling.

"Fire!—down with him!—fire!" shouted the soldiers to one another, as Mark, leaning flat on his horse's main, rode on; and the balls whistled quick, above and around, but not one struck him. "After him, Jack—after him!" cried one of the sentinels, who, perceiving that Mark was not followed, turned his horse to the pursuit; but another yell, wilder than the first, arrested him, and he heard a voice screaming, "This way, boys, this way—we have them here!" and Terry, waving his cap, bounded forward, and called out unceasingly for others to come on. In an instant the whole attention was turned to the front, while with the stroke of a sabre poor Terry was stretched upon the ground, bleeding and senseless.

"It is only that cursed fool we used to see at Macroom, about the barrack gates," said one of the dragoons, as he held a piece of lighted wood beside his face, "and the other fellow cannot have had much more sense, or he would never have tried to ride through a squadron of horse. But there!—he's down now! Did you hear that crash?—that was a horse that fell!"

So it was; Mark had but passed the first party to fall on a much more formidable body further on, and his horse, twice wounded, was at last struck in the shoulder, and fell headlong to the ground pinioning the rider beneath him. With a dexterity that seemed magical, Mark disengaged himself from the wounded animal, and drawing his pistols, prepared to sell his life dearly.

"You are a prisoner, sir," called out the sergeant, as with fearless step he marched towards him.

"Another pace nearer, and I'll send a bullet through you," said Mark; you may have my corpse for your booty, but you'll never lay hands on me living."

"Don't fire, don't fire, men," cried a voice, as the officer rode up at the speed of his horse, and then throwing himself from the saddle, commanded the men to fall back. With looks of astonishment and even of anger, the dragoons retired, while the captain sheathing his sword, approached Mark.

"Thank heaven, Mr. O'Donoghue, you have not fired at my men."

"Am I your prisoner, Captain Travers," said Mark, replacing his weapon.

"No, far from it; it was to serve you I accepted the command of

this party. I knew of the plot by which you were threatened—Hemsworth——"

"He is gone to his reckoning now," said Mark, who never gave credit to Kerry's story.

"Not dead—you do not mean that?"

"Even so, sir, but not as I see you suspect."

"No matter now," cried Travers, wildly, for a thousand dreadful fears came crowding on his mind; "you must escape at once; this will be worse than the charge of treason itself. Was there any witness to his death?"

"None," said Mark, for he remembered that Kate was still fainting during the struggle he believed fatal.

"You must escape at once," repeated Travers, for without directly attributing guilt to Mark, he feared the consequence of this dreadful event. "Keep in the mountain for some little time, and when this mad enterprise has blown over——"

"The country then will be in other hands," interrupted Mark;—"aye, sir, you may look and feel incredulous, but the time is perhaps not distant when I may be able to return your present courtesy. The French are landing——"

"They are putting out to sea—flying—not advancing," said Travers, proudly.

"No, no, you mistake them," said Mark, with a smile of incredulity. "I heard the guns not a quarter of an hour since—would I had never left them."

"There, take my horse, mount quickly, and make for the Bay, and turn him loose on the shore—reach the fleet if you can—in any case, escape; there is no time to lose."

"And you—how are you to account for this?" said Mark. "Will your loyalty stand so severe a trial as that of having assisted a rebel's escape?"

"Leave me to meet my difficulties my own way; turn your thoughts to your own—heaven knows, they are enough."

The tone he spoke in appealed to Mark's feelings more strongly than all he said before, and grasping Travers' hand, he said—

"Oh, if I had but had your friendship once, how different I might be this day; and my father too—what is to become of him?"

"Spare him at least the sorrow of seeing his son arraigned on a charge of treason, if not of worse."

Fortunately Mark heard not the last few words, which rather fell from Travers inadvertently, and were uttered in a low voice.

"There," cried Mark, as the loud report of several guns pealed forth—"they have landed—they will soon be here."

As he spoke, a mounted dragoon rode up to Travers, and whispered a few words in his ear. Frederick motioned the man to fall back, and then approaching Mark, said—

"I was correct, sir—the French fleet is under weigh—the expedition is abandoned; away then before your chance is lost—down to the Bay and get on board; you will at least find a path where there is glory as well as peril; there—away."

"They cannot have done this," cried Mark, in an agony of passion; "they would not desert the cause they have fostered, and leave us to our fate here."

Mark vaulted on Travers' horse as he said this, all feeling for his own safety merged in his anxiety for the issue of the plot.

"Treachery we have had enough of—we may be well spared the curse of cowardice. Good-bye, farewell—few, either friends or foes, have done me the services that you have. If we are to meet again, Travers——"

"Farewell, farewell," cried Travers; "we shall never meet as enemies," and he hastened from the spot, while Mark bending forward in the saddle, pressed the spurs to his horse, and started.

With the speed of one who cared for nothing less than his own safety, Mark urged his horse onward, and deserting the ordinary road, he directed his course to the shore along the base of the mountain—a rough and dangerous path beset with obstacles, and frequently on the very edge of the cliff; at last he reached the Bay, over which the dark storm was raging in all its violence; the wind blowing with short and sudden gusts sent the great waves thundering against the rocks, and with fearful roar through the caves and crevices of the coast. Riding madly on till the white foam dashed over him, he turned on every side, expecting to see the boats of the fleet making for the land, but all was dreary and desolate; he shouted aloud, but his voice was drowned in the uproar of the elements; and then, but not till then, came over him the afflicting dread of desertion. The vivid lightning shot to and fro over the bleak expanse of sea, but not a sail was there—all, all were gone.

There was a projecting promontory of rock which, running out to a considerable distance in the Bay, shut out all view beyond it; the last hope he cherished was, that they might have sought shelter in the bay beneath this, and plunging into the boiling surf, he urged his horse forward—now madly rearing as the strong sea struck him—now buffeting the white waves with vigorous chest—the noble beast braved the

storm-lashed water, and bore him alternately bounding and swimming, as the tide advanced or receded.

The struggle, with all its peril to life, brought back the failing courage to Mark's heart, and he cheered his horse with a cry of triumphant delight, as each great wave passed over them, and still they went on undaunted. It was a short but desperate achievement to round the point of the promontory, where the sea beat with redoubled fury; but the same daring intrepidity seemed to animate both horse and rider, and after a moment of extreme danger, both gained the beach in safety. At the very same instant that the animal touched the strand, a quick flash broke over the sea, and then came the thundering report of a cannon. This was answered by another further out to sea, and then a blue light burst forth on high, and threw its lurid glare over the spars and canvas of a large ship—every rope and block, every man and every gun were displayed in the spectral light. It was a grand, but still an appalling sight, to see the huge mass labouring in the sea, and then the next moment to strain the eyes through the black canopy of cloud that closed around her; for so it was, as the light went out, no trace of the vessel remained, nor was there aught to mark the spot she had occupied.

From time to time the flash and the report of a gun would show where some ship struggled with the raging sea; but to Mark all was mystery. He knew not what it might portend, and hesitated between hope and despair, whether these might prove the preparations for disembarking, or the last signal before sailing.

In the low hut of a fisherman, not far from where he was, a light still twinkled, and thither he hastened: it belonged to the man who had rowed him on board of the frigate, and with whom Kate had spoken in the kitchen. As Mark reached the door, he heard the sound of several voices talking in a low, half-suppressed tone; pushing open the door, he entered, and found about a dozen fishermen standing over the lifeless body of a man in a French uniform.

"Who is this? What has happened?" said Mark, hurriedly.

"It's one of the French officers, sir," said Tom M'Carthy; "he came ashore with us this morning, and to-night, when it came on to blow, and he saw the signals to sail, he insisted on going on board again, and we did our best for him; we twice put out, and twice were sent back again; but the last time we tried, the craft was upset, and the poor fellow could not swim, and we never saw him more, till we found his body on the strand about an hour ago."

Mark helh the light beside the pale features, and saw that he was a

youth of not more than eighteen years; there was no distortion whatever, and the features were calm and tranquil, as if in sleep.

"Let us lay him in the earth, boys," said Mark, as his voice trembled with emotion; it is the least we can do to let him sleep in the land he came to save."

The men lifted the body without a word, and, preceded by Mark, who carried a lantern, issued from the hut. A few paces brought them to a little grassy mound, where the cliff, descending between the rocks, preserved its rich verdure untrodden and untouched.

"Here, this will do, boys," said Mark; "this rock will mark the spot."

The work was soon over, and as the last turf was laid over him, a deafening peal of artillery thundered over the sea, and suddenly, lights shone here and there, through the dark atmosphere.

"He has had a soldier's burial," said Mark; "may his rest be tranquil. And now"—and his voice assumed a firm and determined tone at the moment—"and now, who will put me on board of any ship in that fleet? I have neither gold to offer, nor silver to bribe you. I am poor and powerless, but if the broad lands that were once our own, were mine now, I'd give them all for that one service."

"No boat could live ten minutes in that surf; there's a sea running there would swamp a schooner," said an old man, with white hair.

"We'd never get outside the breakers yonder," said another.

"I think we've had enough of it for one night," muttered a third, with a side-long glance towards the recent grave.

"And you," said Mark, turning fixedly round to Tom M'Carthy, "what words of comfort have you for me?"

"Faix, that I'm ready and willin' to go with you, divil may care who the other is," said the stout-hearted fellow. "I seen the day you jumped into a boat yourself to take the crew off a wreck below the point there, and I took an oath that night I'd never see you wanting for two hands at an oar as long as I could pull one. The waves that isn't too high for you is not a bit too big for me either."

"Well done, Tom," said a powerful looking young fellow beside him, "and I'll be the bow oar for you, an' you'll take me."

"And here's two more of us," said another, as he held a comrade by the hand, "that will never see his honour at a loss, no matter how it blows."

The doubt and hesitation which prevailed but a moment before, were at once changed for confidence and resolution, and eight men now hurried to the beach to launch the boat, and make ready for the enterprize.

"If we could only see a flash, or hear a shot now, we'd know which way to bear down," said Tom, as he stood on the shore, with his eyes turned seaward.

"There—there goes one!" cried Mark, as a red flame shot forth and glittered for a second over the dark water.

"That's the frigate; she's holding on still by her anchors."

"I knew they would not desert us, boys," cried Mark, with wild enthusiasm, for hope gained on him every moment as peril increased.

"Now for it, and all together," said Tom, as he bent forward against the whistling storm, and the craft, as if instinct with life, bounded over the wave, and cleft her way through the boiling surf, while the hardy fishermen strained every nerve, and toiled with all their energy. Mark kneeling in the bow, his eyes strained to catch any signal, seemed perfectly delirious in the transport of his joy.

"Luff her, luff her—here comes a large wave—nobly done, lads—how she mounts the sea—here's another;" but the warning was this time too late, for the wave broke over the boat, and fell in torrents over the crew. With redoubled vigour the stout fellows bent to their work, and once more the boat sped on her course; while Mark cheered them with a shout heard even above the storm, and with a deep, mellow voice chanted out the rude verses of a song—

"The fisherman loves the rippled stream,
And the lover the moon-lit sea,
But the darkening squall
And the sea birds call
Are dearer far to me.

"To see on the white and crest'd wave
The stormy petrel float,
And then to look back
On the stormy track
That glitters behind our boat."

"Avast there, Master Mark, there's wind enough without singing for more," cried one of the fishermen, who, with the superstition of his craft, felt by no means pleased at Mark's ditty; "and there comes a sea to poop a line of battle-ship," and as he said the words, a wave mountains high rolled past, and left them labouring in the deep trough of the sea; while the lurid glare of sheet lightning showed all the ships of the fleet, as, with top-sails bent, they stood out to sea.

"There they go," said one of the fishermen, "and that's all the good they've done us."

"Pull hard, boys," cried Mark, passionately, "it may not be yet too late, strain every arm—the fate of our country may rest upon those bending spars—together, men, together; it is not for life now, it is Ireland is on the struggle:" thus cheering the drooping courage of the men, and eagerly bending his glance towards the sea, his own heart glowed with enthusiasm that made every danger forgotten; and at last, after an hour of desperate exertion, with strength all but exhausted, and nearly overcome by fatigue, they beheld the dark hull of a large ship looming above them. By firing his pistol, Mark attracted the notice of the watch on deck; his signal was replied to, and the next moment the boat was alongside, and Mark clambering up the steep side, stood on the quarter-deck.

"Will the troops not land," said Mark, as the officers crowded eagerly around him—"is the expedition abandoned?"

"Don't you think the hurricane might answer the question, young man?" said a weather-beaten officer, who appeared in command—"or are you so ignorant in naval matters as to suppose that a force could disembark in a gale like this?"

"It might scare a pleasure party," said Mark, rudely, "but for men who have come to give and get hard knocks, methinks this need not disconcert them."

"And who is to aid us if we land?" said the first speaker—"what forces are in arms to join us?—what preparations for ourselves?—have you a musket, have you a horse, or do you yourself, in your own person, represent the alliance we seek for?"

Mark hung down his head abashed and ashamed: too well he knew how treachery had sapped the foundation of the plot; that, betrayed and abandoned by their chiefs, the people had become either apathetic or terror-stricken, and that, if a blow were to be struck for Irish independence, it must be by the arm of the stranger.

"It is needless to waste words, sir," said the French captain, for such he was; "the admiral has twice made the signal to stand out to sea. The French Republic will have suffered loss enough in some of the finest ships of her navy, without hazarding fifteen thousand brave fellows upon an exploit so hopeless."

"The Captain says truly," interposed another; "Ireland is not ripe for such an enterprize; there may be courage enough among your countrymen, but they know not how to act together. There's no slavery like dissension."

"That boat will be swamped," said the officer of the watch, as he pointed to the fishing-craft, which still held on to the leeward of the

ship; "if you are going back to shore, sir, let me advise you, for your own sake, and your comrades', too, to lose no time about it."

"Far better to come with us," said a powerful looking man in the uniform of an infantry regiment; "the young gentleman seems inclined to see service. 'Ma foi,' we seldom lack an opportunity of showing it."

"I'll never go back," said Mark; "I have looked at my country for the last time."

With many a welcome speech the officers pressed round and grasped his hands, and for a moment all their misfortunes were forgotten in the joy with which they received their new comrade.

"Who will be my banker for some gold," said Mark; "those brave fellows have risked their lives for me, and I have nothing but thanks to give them."

"Let this go to the expenses of the expedition," said the captain, laughing, as he threw his purse to Mark. The young man leaned over the bulwark, and hailed the boat, and, after a moment of great difficulty, one of the fishermen reached the deck.

"I wish to bid you good-bye, Tom," said Mark, as he grasped the rough hand in his; "you are the last thing I shall see of my country; farewell, then; but remember, that however deeply wrongs may gall, and injuries oppress you, the glory of resistance is too dearly bought at the cost of companionship with the traitor and the coward—good-bye for ever. He pressed the purse into the poor fellow's hand; nor was it without a struggle he could compel him to accept it. A few minutes after the boat was cleaving her way through the dark water, her prow turned to the land which Mark had left for ever.

Seated on the deck, silent and thoughtful, Mark seemed indifferent to the terrible storm, whose violence increased with every moment, and as the vessel tacked beneath the tall cliffs, when every heart beat anxiously, and every eye was fixed on the stern rocks above them, his glance was calm, and his pulse was tranquil; he felt as though fate had done her worst, and that the future had no heavier blow in store for him.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE END.

THE storm of that eventful night is treasured among the memories of the peasantry of the south. None living had ever witnessed a gale of such violence—none since have seen a hurricane so dreadful and enduring: for miles along the coast the scattered spars and massive timbers told of shipwreck and disasters, while inland, uptorn trees and fallen rocks attested its power.

The old castle of Carrig-na-curra did not escape the general calamity; the massive walls that had resisted for centuries the assaults of war and time, were shaken to their foundations, and one strong, square tower, the ancient keep, was rent by lightning from the battlements to the base, while far and near might be seen fragments of timber, and even of masonry, hurled from their places by the storm. For whole days after the gale abated, the air resounded with an unceasing din—the sound of the distant sea, and the roar of the mountain torrents, as swollen and impetuous they tore along.

The devastation thus wide spread, seemed not to have been limited to the mere material world, but to have extended its traces over man: the hurricane was recognized as the interposition of heaven, and the disaster of the French fleet looked on as the vengeance of the Almighty. It did not need the superstitious character of the southern peasants' mind to induce this belief: the circumstances in all their detail were too strongly corroborative, not to enforce conviction on sterner imaginations; and the very escape of the French ships from every portion of our channel fleet, which at first was deemed a favour of fortune, was now regarded as pointing out the more signal vengeance of Heaven. Dismay and terror were depicted in every face; the awful signs of the gale which were seen on every side suggested gloom and dread, and each speculated how far the anger of God might fall upon a guilty nation.

There is no reason to doubt the fact, that whatever the ultimate issue of the struggle, the immediate fate of the country was decided on that night. Had the French fleet arrived in full force, and landed the troops, there was neither preparation for resistance, nor means of defence, undertaken by the Government.

How far the peasantry might or might not have associated themselves with a cause to which the Romish clergy were then manifestly averse, may be a matter of uncertainty; but there are a sufficient number in every land, and every age, who will join the ranks of battle with no other prospect than the day of pillage and rapine. Such would have flocked around the tricolor in thousands, and meet companions such would have been to that portion of the invading army called the "Legion des Francs"—a battalion consisting of liberated felons and galley slaves—the murderers and robbers of France, drilled, armed, and disciplined to carry liberty to Ireland! With this force, and a company of the "Artillerie Legere," Wolfe Tone proposed to land; and as the expedition had manifestly failed, any further loss would be inconsiderable; and as for the "Legion," he naively remarked, "the Republic would be well rid of them."

Let us, however, turn from this theme, to the characters of our tale, of which a few words only remain to be told. By Terry, who made his escape after being wounded by the dragoons, was the first news brought to Carrig-na-curra of Mark's rencontre with the dragoons; and while the O'Donoghue and Kate were yet speculating in terror as to the result, a small party of cavalry was seen coming up the causeway at a brisk trot, among whom rode a person in coloured clothes.

"It is Mark—my boy is taken!" cried the old man in a burst of agony, and he buried his head in his hands, and sobbed aloud. Kate never spoke, but a sick, cold faintness crept over her, and she stood almost breathless with anxiety. She heard the horses as they drew up at the door, but had not strength to reach the window and look out. The bell was rung violently—every clank sent a pang through her bosom. The door was opened, and now she heard Kerry's voice, but could not distinguish the words. Then there was a noise as of some one dismounting, and the clatter of a sabre was heard along the flagged hall. This ceased, and she could recognize Kerry's step as he came up the corridor to the door of the tower.

"Come in," cried she to his summons, but her utmost effort could not make the words audible. "Come in," said she again.

Kerry heard it not, but opening the door cautiously, he entered.

"'Tis the Captain, Miss Kate, wants to know if he could see the master."

"Yes," said she, in a voice scarcely above a whisper. "Who is with him? Is there a prisoner there?"

"Faix, there is then; but Captain Travers will tell you all himself."

"Captain Travers!" cried Kate, a deep flush covering her face.

"Yes, madam," said Frederick, as he entered at the same moment,

"I am but too happy to bear pleasant tidings, to think of my want of courtesy in intruding unannounced."

"Leave the room—shut the door, Kerry," said Kate, as with eyes fixed on Travers she waited for him to continue.

"Your cousin is safe, Miss O'Donoghue—he has reached the fleet, and is already on his way to France."

"Thank God!" cried Kate fervently, as she fell upon her uncle's shoulders, and whispered the tidings into his ear.

The old man looked up and stared wildly around him.

"Where's Mark, my love—where did you say he was?"

"He's safe, uncle—he's on board of a French ship, and bound for France, beyond the reach of danger."

"For France! And has he left me—has he deserted his old father?"

"His life was in peril, sir," whispered Kate, who, stung by the old man's selfishness, spoke almost angrily.

"My boy has abandoned me," muttered the O'Donoghue, the one idea, absorbing all others, occupied his mind, and left him deaf to every explanation or remonstrance.

"You are right, Miss O'Donoghue," said Travers, gently, "his danger was most imminent—the evidence against him was conclusive and complete; and although one of the principal witnesses could not have appeared, Lanty Lawler ——"

"And was he an informer?"

"He was, madam; but amid the mass of treachery he has met a just fate. Barrington, determined to punish the fellow, has come forward, and given himself up; but with such evidence of the horse-dealer's guilt, that his conviction is certain; the sums he received from France are all proved under his own hand, and now that Hemsworth is no more, and Lawler's treachery has no patron, his case has little hope. He is at this moment my prisoner; we took him on the mountain where he had gone with a party to secure Mr. Mark O'Donoghue, for whose capture a large reward was offered."

As Kate listened to this recital, delivered in a tone which showed the contempt the speaker entertained for an enterprise undertaken by such actors, her own indignant pride revolted at the baseness of those with whom her cousin was associated.

"Yes," said she at length, and speaking unconsciously aloud, "no cause could prosper with supporters like these; there must be rottenness in the confederacy that links such agencies as these together. And had my cousin not one friend?—was there not one to wring his hand at parting?" said she hurriedly, changing the theme of her thoughts.

"There was one," said Travers, modestly; Mr. O'Donoghue was noble-hearted enough, even in the hour of calamity, to forget an ancient grudge, and to call me his friend. He did more—he wished we had been friends for many a day before."

"Would that you had," said Kate, as the tears burst forth, and ran down her cheeks.

"And we might have been such," continued Travers, "had not deceit and malevolence sowed discord been our families. You know not, Miss O'Donoghue, how deeply this treachery worked, and how artfully its plans were conceived. The very hopes whose disappointment has darkened my life, were fed and fostered by him, who knew how little reason I had to indulge them; forgive me, I pray, if I allude to a subject I ought never to recall. It was Hemsworth persuaded me that my suit would not prove unsuccessful; it was by his advice and counsel I risked the avowal which has cost me the happiness of my future life. I will speak of this no more," said Travers, who saw in the deep blush that covered Kate's features, the distress the theme occasioned her. "It was a selfish thought that prompted me to excuse my hardihood at the cost of your feelings."

"I will not let you speak thus, sir," said Kate, in a voice faint from excessive emotion, "there was no such hardihood in one favoured by every gift of fortune stooping to one humble as I am; but there were disparities wider than those of rank between us, and if I can now see how greatly these were exaggerated by the falsehood and treachery of others, yet I know that our opinions are too wide apart, to make agreement aught else than a compromise between us."

"Might not time soften, if not obliterate such differences," whispered Travers, timidly.

"It could not with me," said Kate, resolutely; "this is the losing side ever, and my nature is a stubborn one—it has no sympathies save with those in misfortune; but we can be friends," said she, extending her hand frankly towards him—"friends firm and true, not the less strong in regard, because our affections have not overcome our convictions."

"Do not speak so decisively," Miss O'Donoghue, said Travers, as his lip trembled with strong emotion; "even at this moment how much has misrepresentation clouded our knowledge of each other; let time, I entreat of you, dissipate these false impressions, or give me, at least, the opportunity of becoming more worthy of your esteem."

"While I should become less so," interrupted Kate, rapidly; "no, no; my duties are here," and she pointed to the old man, who, with

an expression of stupid fatuity, sat with his hands clasped, and his eyes fixed on vacancy. "Do not not make me less equal to my task, by calling on me for such a pledge. Besides," added she, with a smile, "you are too truly English, to suggest a divided allegiance; we are friends; but we can never be more."

Travers pressed the white hand to his lips without a word, and the moment after his horse was heard descending the causeway, as with desperate speed he hurried from the spot so fatal to all his hopes.

Scarcely had Frederick left the castle, when a chaise and four, urged to the utmost speed, dashed up to the door, and Sir Archy, followed by Herbert, jumped out. The old man, travel-stained and splashed, held an open paper in his hand, and cried aloud, as he entered the drawing-room—

"He's pardoned, he's pardoned—a free pardon to Mark!"

"He's gone, he's away to France," said Kate, as fearing to awaken the O'Donoghue to any exertion of intelligence, she pointed cautiously towards him.

"All the better, my sweet lassie," cried M'Nab, folding her in his arms; "his arm will not be the less bold in battle, because no unforgiven treason weighs upon his heart. But my brother, what ails him?—he does not seem to notice me."

"He is ill—my father is ill," said Herbert, with a terrified accent.

"He is worse," whispered M'Nab to himself, as passing his hand within the waistcoat, he laid it on his heart.

It was so—the courage that withstood every assault of evil fortune—every calamity which poverty and distress can bring down—failed at last;—the strong heart was broken—the O'Donoghue was dead.

We will once more ask our readers to accompany us to the glen, the scene of our story. It was of an evening, calm and tranquil as that on which our tale opened, on a day in August, in the year 1815, that two travellers, leaving the postillion of their carriage to refresh his horses, advanced alone and on foot for above a mile into this tranquil valley; the air had all that deathlike stillness so characteristic of autumn, while over the mountains and the lake the same rich mellow light was shed. As the travellers proceeded slowly, they stopped from time to time, and gazed on the scene; and, although their looks met, and glance seemed to answer glance, they neither of them spoke: from their appearance, it might have been conjectured

that they were foreigners. The man, bronzed by weather and exposure, possessed features which, in all their sternness, were yet eminently handsome: he wore a short thick moustache, but the armless sleeve of his coat, fastened on the bosom, was a sign still more indisputable than even his port and bearing, that he was a soldier. His companion was a lady in the very pride and bloom of beauty, but her dress, more remarkably than his, betrayed the foreigner; in the rapid look she turned from the bold scenery around them to the face of him at whose side she walked, one might read either a direct appeal to memory, or the expression of wonder and admiration of the spot. Too much engrossed by his own thoughts, or too deeply occupied by the scene before him, the man moved on, until at last he came in front of a low ruined wall, beneath a tall and overhanging cliff. He stopped for some seconds, and gazed at this with such intentness as prevented him from noticing the figure of a beggar, who, in all the semblance of extreme poverty, sat crouching among the ruins. She was an old, or at least seemed a very old woman—her hair, uncovered by cap or hood, was white as snow, but her features still preserved an expression of quick intelligence, as, lifting her head from the attitude of moping thought, she fixed her eyes stedfastly on the travellers.

"Give her something, 'mon cher,'" said the lady to her companion in French; but the request was twice made before he seemed conscious of it. The woman, meanwhile, sat still, and neither made any demand for charity, or any appeal to their compassion.

"This is Glenflesk, my good woman," said he at length, with the intonation of a foreign accent on the words.

The woman nodded assentingly, but made no reply.

"Whose estate is all this here?" said he, pointing with his hand to either side of the valley.

"Sorra one o' me knows whose it is," said the woman, in a voice of evident displeasure. "When I was a child it was the O'Donoghues', but they are dead and gone now—I don't know whose it is."

"And the O'Donoghues are dead and gone, you say? What became of the last of them?—what was his fate?"

"Is it the one that turned Protestant you mean?" said the woman, as an expression of fiendish malignity shot beneath her dark brows: "he was the only one that ever prospered, because he was a heretic, maybe."

"But how did he prosper?" said the stranger.

"Didn't he marry the daughter of the rich Englishman, that lived

there beyant? and wasn't he a member of Parlimint? and sure they tell me that he went out beyond the says to be a Judge somewhere in foreign parts—in India, I believe."

"And who lives in the old castle of the family?"

"The crows and the owls lives in it now," said the woman, with a grating laugh—"the same way as the weasels and the rats burrow in my own little place here. Ay, you may stare and wonder, but here, where you see me sit, among these old stones and black timbers, was my own comfortable home—the house I was born and reared in—and the hearth I sat by when I was a child."

The man whispered a few words to his companion in a deep, low voice—she started, and was about to speak, when he stopped her, saying, "Nay, nay, it is better not;" then, turning to the woman, asked, "And were there, then, no others, whose fortunes you remember?"

"It is little worth while remembering them," said the crone, whose own misfortunes shed bitterness over all the memory of others. "There was an old Scotchman that lived there long after the others were gone, and when the niece went back to the nunnery in France he staid there still alone by himself. The people used to see him settling the room, and putting books here, and papers there, and making all ready agin she came back—and that's the way he spent his time to the day of his death. Don't cry, my lady; he was a hard-hearted old man, and it isn't eyes like yours should weep tears for him; if you want to pity any one, 'pity the poor, that's houseless and friendless.'"

"And the Lodge," said the stranger—"is not that the name they gave the pretty house beside the lake?"

"'Tisn't a pretty house now, then," said the hag, laughing. "It's a ruin like the rest."

"How is that?—does the Englishman never come to it?"

"Why should he come to it? Sure it's in law ever since that black-hearted villain Hemsworth was killed—nobody knows who owns it, and they say it will never be found out; but," said she, rising, and gathering her cloak around her as she prepared to move away—"there's neither luck nor grace upon the spot. God Almighty made it beautiful and lovely to look upon, but man and man's wickedness brought a curse down upon it."

The man drew his purse forth, and, while endeavouring to take some pieces of money from it by the aid of his single remaining hand, she turned abruptly about, and, staring him stedfastly in the face, said—

"I'll not take your money—'tisn't money will serve me now—them that's poor themselves will never see me in want."

"Stop a moment," said the stranger, "I have a claim on you."

"That you haven't," said the woman, sternly—"I know you well, Mark O'Donoghue—ay, and your wife, Miss Kate there; but it isn't by a purse full of gold you'll ever make up for desarting the cause of ould Ireland."

"Don't be angry with her," whispered a low mild voice behind. He turned, and saw a very old man dressed in black, and with all the semblance of a priest. "Don't be angry with her, sir; poor Mary's senses are often wandering; and," added he with a sigh, "she has met sore trials, and may well be pardoned, if, in the bitterness of her grief, she looks at the world with little favour or forgiveness. She has mistaken you for another, and hence the source of her anger."

THE END.

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With my sincerest respects, and, if I dared, I should say, with my warmest regards,

I am, yours truly,

CHARLES LEVER.

Carlsruhe, October 18th, 1845.

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